

MEMOIRS
OF
HIS OWN LIFE,

BY
TATE WILKINSON,
PATENTEE OF THE THEATRES-ROYAL, YORK AND HULL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

—IF I HAD HELD MY PEN BUT HALF AS WELL AS
I HAVE HELD MY BOTTLE—WHAT A CHARMING
HAND I SHOULD HAVE WROTE BY THIS TIME!

VOL. II.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR P. BYRNE, P. WOGAN, J. PARKER,
J. MOORE, A. GRUEBER, W. JONES, J. RICE,
R. WHITE, AND G. DRAPER.
M,DCC,XCI.



MEMOIRS

OF

TATE WILKINSON.

ON Monday, July 23, I acted Hamlet, Mr. Moody the Grave-digger; dancing by Mrs. Blake, (better known by the name of Miss Polly Durham). The farce was the Chaplet.—As I was paying attention, in the fifth act, to Mr. Moody's Grave-digger, Mr. Kennedy (the manager) plucked me by the sleeve, and said, "Mind what you do, for Mr. Garrick is in the pit!"—It rather alarmed me; but having time before my entrance to reconnoitre, and not finding any likeness I looked upon it as a joke; and not hearing from any person that he had been seen, and so well known, I went out to supper and staid late:—But the next morning, July 24, I was waked by a messenger from the Fountain Tavern, with Mr. Garrick's invitation to breakfast: I was of course astonished at such an un-

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expected

expected visitant at Portsmouth, and wondered still more at the occasion, which in my hurried thoughts I could not devise. I instantly returned an answer that I would with pleasure wait on him; hastily equipped myself, and entered the room that great personage then graced, made my bow, and received a very hearty and friendly meeting. Here was a change!—The following thought occurred to me.

O world! thy slipp'ry turns, O world!
 Friends now fast sworn,
 Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,
 Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise,
 Are still together; who twine, (as 'twere) in love
 Unseparable, shall within this hour,
 On a dissention of a doir, break out
 To bitterest enmity. So fellest foes,
 Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep,
 To take the one the other, by some chance,
 Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends,
 And interjoin their issues.

On this wonderful greeting we were the most cordial, good, easy acquaintance that can be imagined: We chatted agreeably, for he seemed as pleased as I really was at this astonishing alteration.

After breakfast we walked on the ramparts, and then went to the dock-yards; he was in such good spirits that he ordered a bottle of hock to be made into a cool tankard, with balm, &c. It was at noon in the height of summer, and the heat was his excuse for so extraordinary a draught to him before dinner.

My reader may be certain that whenever Mr. Garrick chose to throw off acting and dignity,
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and was not surrounded by business to perplex him, he had it in his power to render himself a most pleasing, improving, and delightful companion.

Mr. Garrick's walking arm in arm with me, was an honour I dreamed not of. He congratulated me on being so great a favourite; and what, he said, was of much more service, the being so well acquainted with the leading people at that place, of which, by inquiry, he soon heard all particulars; told me, he was on a visit at Dr. Garney's, a gentleman of eminence who lived at Wickham, about eight miles from Portsmouth, to the left of Portsdown, once a physician, but had given over practising—his fortune being fully equal to ease and affluence. Mr. Garrick told me this visit had been for years promised, but not paid till now; said, that Dr. Garney was an old and intimate friend, and he should be there seven or eight days: Mrs. Garrick was there, and had sent him as a messenger, with Dr. Garney's compliments and her commands to insist that I would fix my own day, and give them the pleasure of my company, which visit they would all return: So, Tate, says my kind Mr. Garrick, mind you are well provided, for we shall make it early in next week. This obliging invitation I gladly complied with, dressed in my best, and even of that he took notice, and said all was well except my buckles, which being, (in the present fashion) large, and low on the instep, he observed were like a sailor's. I did not want for lace to make me a gentleman—not absurd then—but such a figure now would be laughed at as it passed along.

Mr. Garrick received me at the Doctor's more like his son than merely a common acquaintance, to whom he meant only to be civil and well-bred: Nor was Mrs. Garrick a jot less kind; she scorned to be outdone in courtesy, and met me with all that apparent regard as if a beloved relation had just arrived from the East-Indies. She was in truth a most elegant woman:—grace was in her step.—I was introduced to Dr. Garney, his lady, and son, and after that to company who were quite strangers to me. They appeared just like what were their universal well-known character, every thing that was good, with power and will to render their pleasant mansion a happy resort for their acquaintance; the situation was a little paradise in every respect that art and nature could contribute to make so; it appeared to me to much advantage, as the four immediate miles from Portsmouth till you reach Hilsey barracks, the country is very indifferent, very dreary, and all confined, for those four miles are regular fortifications, ditches with draw-bridges, &c.; so that if it was not for the ramparts next the sea, with that beautiful prospect of the Isle of Wight, the ocean, and the shipping, Portsmouth would be a very disagreeable situation. In short, much as I liked that residence I never could approve of it as a pleasant summer retreat, the ramparts being the only good walk, and those so exposed to the sun and reflection from the water, that it made the evening intolerable; nor has there been a possibility I fancy, from the last time I was there, to have formed such a comfortable resource as that of a cool and pleasant walk: Though
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when once arrived on Portsdown, ample amends is made to those who are on horseback or in a carriage, as it certainly must be, (I should suppose) all open to the view of the country behind; and then by its other overlooking Portsmouth, the fleet, Isle of Wight, St. Helen's, and beyond Southampton, it must at least be one of the finest prospects in the world.

My entertainment for the day (for I was at Dr. Garney's before twelve) was as if calculated to please a man of fashion. As to Mr. Garrick, he, being much the youngest man of the two, took me (for two hours) to every part of the house and garden that was worth observation, and to the high top of an observatory, built by the Doctor for study, curiosity, and prospect, and very near equal to that just mentioned of Portsdown. Mr. Garrick ran and skipped about like a lad of twenty.—Indeed civility and kindness seemed the study of the day from him and the whole family, and were visibly the intention and practice towards me.

Mr. Garrick had heard my benefit was over; but when I informed him I was to have another, he strongly recommended my night to the patronage of that worthy family; and said, he would take it equally as an obligation conferred on himself, if bestowed on his friend Mr. Wilkinson—(there was honour!)—for I was a youth whose prosperity he had at heart, because I was deserving; and added, unless that had been his opinion of me he had not invited or recommended me to the honour of Dr. Garney's friendship. After tea, coffee, &c. we finished the

evening with playing at bowls on the green and in walking. I did not leave Wickham till ten o'clock at night, and received a general invitation to make that house my own, whenever convenience permitted or inclination prompted me. I remember, when talking of plays that day after dinner, Mr. Garrick said, that he never acted but to one bad house, and that was Abel Drugger, when there was not 40l. in the theatre.

On my departure from this so truly agreeable day, never to be obliterated, Mr. Garrick gave me the play of Barbarossa, to be ready in that character, and to study Gloster in Jane Shore, and jokingly said, he hoped there would not be any impropriety in bespeaking a play for Friday, July 27;—"and we desire, Wilkinson, you will fix on a favourite character, and do your best for the credit of both; and damn it, Tate, Mrs. Garrick expects you will have a Dish of Tea ready after her jaunt, by way of relaxation; and if you disappoint us, Dr. and Mrs. Garney, and all the party will be very angry, therefore take care." All these requests I assured him should be complied with. He escorted me to my chaise, and for the second time in his life made me very happy; for I on my part never wanted gratitude or a pride to obtain his good opinion. But our state of mind so fluctuates that it is merely a common barometer—"Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

I had promised more, much more than I could make good, for I had not the least doubt but any play I appointed would be granted servilely with a bow, when authorised by the name of Garrick.

Here,

Here, however, I was mistaken, for the next day when I summoned the company, the three or four theatrical potentates in power pertaining to the petty state were very refractory, each wanting to be principal on the occasion; and by a majority of votes I lost my lieutenancy, nor was I by myself, for Mr. Moody was not suffered on any account to be capital on this occasion.

A Mr. White was the yearly Garrick, whose fame sounded and resounded from the county of Devon to the bounds of Hampshire, therefore neither he, nor they would permit any display of mine, as each wanted to be a surprising actor, and be elected by due right of merit in Drury-Lane house of lords and commons. Says the morning gin and brandy-cag hero, with a face unknown to cleanliness, speaking *g* affectedly, and leaving out the letter *r*, "Why is Mr. Wilkinson to appoint a play for this Mr. Ga—ick? Who is Mr. Ga—ick? Mr. Ga—ick has no command over our company at Portsmouth"—and with the utmost non-chalance said, "Mr. Ga—ick cannot, I think, be displeased with *my* Macheath, though, I want no *favour* from Mr. Ga—ick"—assuring himself thereby of shewing even Garrick—"Here you shall see what you shall see," and by that performance be engaged at Drury-Lane, and make king David tremble.

So Mr. White who was lord paramount, after as much altercation as would settle an address to the Minister, fixed on the Beggar's Opera, Friday, July 27th, 1759; Macheath, Mr. White, and Mr. Moody was permitted to have the honour of acting Lockit. I was allowed to give Tea,

and by particular desire, to please me, was added the Author, Cadwallader by me of course. It was with difficulty I could reserve twelve *good* seats, as all the genteel people, on hearing that Mr. Garrick and his lady were to be there, had crowded early to the theatre; the first act was finished and no Mr. Garrick had appeared, and on the second act beginning, the audience and the performers blamed me for having asserted a falsehood, and by way of a hum collected them to be disappointed, and I really began to think it strange myself; but to my great relief and satisfaction, about the middle of the second act, in my party came, which was to me a gratifying triumph, as Mr. White was very angry at having played so much of his Macheath and Mr. Garrick not present. They were soon settled and paid much attention, and very considerately and kindly Mr. and Mrs. Garrick and their party made a point of obliging me by conferring strong marks of approbation.

Mr. Garrick was so pleased with my friend Mr. Moody, in Lockit, that he sent for him the next morning and engaged him for the ensuing season, at a salary of thirty shillings per week, because he told him he *loved to encourage merit!* Mr. Moody obtained Mr. Garrick's promise that he might make his *entrée* in the character of King Henry VIII. Mr. Garrick after the farce, came round and insisted on my supping with them at the Fountain Tavern; the noble troop of strangers were much increased by the addition of several gentlemen, particularly as all the medical people of consequence belonging to the place went

went to pay their compliments to their acquaintances, Dr. Garney and family, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Garrick. Mrs. Garrick very politely thanked me for my performance, which before so many people certainly appeared respectful, attentive, and kind; and I judged my fortune made.—
O fickle fortune!

About half past twelve Mrs. Garrick was for retiring, and as one of Dr. Garney's friends had provided them beds, (not suffering them to sleep at the tavern,) Mrs. Garrick had to walk up the street to her destined apartment; Mr. Garrick, who never failed in attention to his lady, would not trust her to the servant's care only, but would himself attend her, and then return back to the company. He observed I came that evening in a very large handsome sea-captain's cloak, which he said he admired much, and he would with my leave wear it to attend Mrs. Garrick to her residence. All the ladies went at the same time to private houses, and the great little man wrapped himself in my *then* honoured roquelaure. He soon returned, said he was pleased with his walk, as it had made him so well acquainted with my cloak, and which he thought would be so comfortable for the winter, that if he had one, many a walk should he take in it, instead of going in a sedan from Southampton-street to Drury-Lane; therefore requested I would not leave Portsmouth without procuring such another, and take it to London for him.

The evening was very chatty; he had all attention paid him, and in consequence shewed himself to great advantage. He asked me if I

had seen *that d—— d Foote*? I answered “No.” To which he replied with vehemence, he hoped, for my sake, I never would, if I could avoid it, either see or speak to him again. What all this violent kindness proceeded from I never could account for: However I thought then, and do to this hour think myself highly obliged; for, to the observer, it bore every mark of sincere benevolence and regard.

It was three in the morning before the party broke up, a very uncommon hour for him, he took a most cordial and friendly leave, and I was much pleased with my affable, and agreeable entertainment, and wished him a good morning, and a safe and pleasant journey to his seat at Hampton-Court, for which place he was to set forward in two or three days.

My second benefit was on Wednesday the 29th of August, DOUGLAS, TEA, and LETHE. My characters were Douglas, Old Man, and Lord Chalkstone.—I thought it would be rude and impolitic when this ceremony grew near, if I did not, according to the repeated invitations I had received, wait on Dr. Garney at Wickham. I hired the handsomest horse I could, thinking that a post chaise for the day looked idle as well as extravagant for a distance of only eight miles, though not a sailor in Portsmouth but would have proved a better jockey than myself. To make which clear I must relate my John Gilpin's ride to Wickham, which has made me dread horseback ever since. I had seldom used myself to that mode of travelling; for though I had frequently gone from London to Hampton-Court and Richmond,

mond, yet it was generally in a post chaise, which ever was and is my favourite method of passing from place to place.

The ostler of the Fountain brought to my door a very fine looking horse, and observing I wore spurs, said "Pray Mr. Wilkinson, do you often ride on horseback?" I assured him the contrary: "Because," added he, "I beg then, Sir, as you are not a jockey, that I may take them off, for the horse I have brought is so very spirited, it may be dangerous for you to keep them on." To this disarrangement I assented, and for the first mile, though hemmed in by the draw-bridges, and going on gently, found it was very difficult, either by giving the horse his own way or checking him, to keep him within the power of my art of horsemanship, but entertained hopes when I got into the open road by putting him into a canter that I should do very well. By degrees the horse seemed wisely to comprehend that his own self-will and sagacity were superior to his rider's; my ignorance was manifest to the animal, and as he was fully convinced I assumed a government to which I was not by any means competent, he was determined on rebellion, and to himself usurped the reins of power. The renewal of it to my fancy, even now, makes me giddy, and I verily believe from that hour my brain was weakened, which must plead some apology; and it is a remark of truth, that in almost every accident, whether by falls down stairs or in the street, from six years old my unfortunate head has always suffered. These bruises on recovery may in some degree account for heaviness and
stupidity,

stupidity, and naturally for the luminary rays not to have shone forth so bright as I wished them : Even the night when I broke my leg, my head was so jarred on the pavement as to occasion a violent stun, and then such excruciating pain as absolved all notion or feeling of my leg being in the least injured, till endeavouring to walk on my recovery from the pain, my leg already broke, unable to do its office, let me down and snapped the ancle bone.

After having achieved near two miles with safety, my Bucephalus set off like mad, I not being able by any means to keep my saddle, but sat in a state of fear and terror : In about half a mile, after he had got into this wild freak, in the narrow road I met the London waggon, where with care there was scarce room to pass by it, but to which this dreadful beast rushed, that the wheel stopped and checked my right leg and brought me to the ground, and on my fall the horse's hind foot struck my jaw, and made it bleed most plentifully. Providentially the men stopped the waggon, but almost against their will, for they could not conceive from the fury of the beast, and the supposed misguided rage of the rider, but I was some foolish mad fellow eager to shew my horsemanship, neck or nothing.

The waggoners behaved with more civility than is usual for such animals ; for in general they certainly are merely such. They only damned me for a *feool* ; for they were *right zure I mun be mad to ride dumb beast to fright the waggon like*. But when I declared my innocence, as to any intended violence on their carriage, and told them

them the real cause they thought it a very good joke and pronounced "I should never be a sportsman sufficient to win the King's plate at Newmarket."

While I was wiping off the dust and blood, and was really much bruised, and with reason alarmed, for had not the waggoners, from seeing Gilpin's certain danger, stopped the waggon, I must have experienced a shocking death, by being crushed under the wheels, near thirty years before this day of relation, or at best I could only have existed as a dreadful spectacle, the gay mettled courser having disengaged himself of his rider, was all the time feeding on such odd bits of grass as he could find. I was helped on his back and reassumed the reins with as much ease, as if no accident had occurred, and I had only mounted a lady's gentle pad.

The waggoners desired me not to ride again like a devil upon the king's high road, for I might have seen *waggon like*, and at the same time have seen there was not room to pass it, and poor beast was so quiet, it must have been all my fault. I bore this second lecture with patience, so thanked Mr. Waggoner, and proceeded on my journey; for as to dwelling longer on my ignorance it was sufficiently explained, and would have only increased their contempt, not created pity, and therefore would be a loss of time to us all, as our journey's end was quite contrary to attain.

I determined to be very steady and not venture on the perilous canter any more, a gentle trot at the most was to suffice, and that with all precaution; we were jogging on as if by mutual agree-

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ment with great regularity and composure, when an officer, who was going to Hilsey Barracks, cried out, "Your friend SCOTT dines at Hilsey—do come to dinner, Wilkinson,"—and went galloping on; my fiery footed steed, scorning to be outdone in courtesy, obeyed the summons with the utmost swiftness, not by any means waiting to hear or consult my opinion as to the invitation, while Gilpin like, I held by the pummel of the saddle out of breath, and expected every instant my neck would be broke: I was at the last gasp with this devil of a horse; for the officer had no thought but I was determined to out-ride him, and be at Hilsey the first. I found pulling or holding like Major Sturgeon by the main, was all to no purpose, and every moment supposed I should be sprawling on the ground; but on seeing the turnpike I cried out aloud, "Shut the gate! Murder! murder! For God's sake shut the gate!" At first they did not comprehend me, but on observing my awkward manner of riding on this my flying-horse, and my continued cry of "Shut the gate," they did so before I got to it; then another fear instantly arose, which was that of the horse's despising the barred gate and leaping over it, which if he had, there would have been one Major Sturgeon less in the theatrical world; but fortunately the creature, either in pity to my fears or regard for his own limbs, or from the custom of stopping at the gate, (which I cannot pronounce) halted there and that suddenly, on a supposition, may be, that the King's duty was necessary to be loyally paid, to which he was possibly daily accustomed, and to my astonishment,

ment, in the midst of horrors, he pleasingly surprised me by so doing, for he seemed equal to any mad exploit whatever.—Here I stayed and got a glass of water, and from the turnpike for about a mile to the left, on the irregular paths of Portsdown, I expected he had settled to reason, and had tried my skill in horsemanship sufficiently; but on the up hill and down dale once more he began, and more swift than ever, without a chance of my meeting with any cottage, or modern shepherd or shepherdess, in case of accident or misfortune, having quite left the public road. For me to expatiate on the wonders I this day performed in the noble art of vaulting horsemanship, might make young Astley fearful of a rival, and dare me to a trial of skill. The sensible beast certainly knew what an insignificant Major he had on his back, and determined to make a frisky day of it at my expence. I was in hopes till he took this third unlucky frolic all would have been well, and that the headstrong servant was sensible of the errors he had already committed, and I began to fancy myself an elegant prancer, when he rapidly flew with me to a precipice of very considerable height, where I thought he would for his own sake have stopped his career; but to convince me he was superior to fear, and scorned even imminent danger, down he plunged headlong to the bottom. I have seen something like this heroic action in an old pantomime of Mr. Rich's, called Perseus and Andromeda; where Perseus, like a flaming god, suspended by a wheel of large circumference, was whirled with great velocity around the theatric clouds, and struck
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with his mighty sword the frightful Gorgon, who midst raging billows was ready to seize the chained Andromeda, his wished-for prey: One fatal evening the wheel and pulleys broke, and down fell Perseus on the harmless stuffed dragon, and instantly the curtain was dropped to hide the disgrace, and to hasten to the relief of the before lofty air-riding god.

It needs not the traveller's talent to point mine out as a frightful situation in every respect, as myself and horse had taken the dreadful plunge; I in idea gave up the ghost, thinking all was inevitably over, and that there was not a possibility of life being preserved; this was momentary. Ease from pain brings death, and so with me—It was, I guess, some minutes before I recovered from the shock of the fall, or to the least ray of restored senses; but thank God Almighty they did return by degrees, though sickness was violent, the horse still lying on my thigh, my head was on the hilly part, and the horse's feet at the bottom, which kept part of his weight from crushing my thigh.

After finding I had so miraculously escaped with life, I was fearful, as my right leg and thigh felt so much stunned, that they were broke; but by degrees pulling at the rough hill gently, I got my left foot equal to push on the saddle, and so relieved myself, but yet doubted whether I was not in the Elysian Fields; I was in such a state of perturbation and misery, with pain, sickness, and wonder, that it was a delirium. When I was more collected, I looked at the horse, as he lay almost lifeless, and by his not making any attempt to

to move, I feared his limbs had suffered, and that, I supposed, would make it an expensive ride, added to my surgeon's bill. Staying there would not do at any rate, so as soon as I was able to get on my legs I slid to the bottom, took hold of the bridle, and the horse with great difficulty arose, and was as patient as a pet lamb: I winded him round and round the rugged place as well and as gently as I could, till by slow degrees, aided by that sweet maid Patience, I got him out of the dreary depth, and once more attained a part appertaining to Portsdown Hills. Notwithstanding my third disaster, I again had courage to mount, being only about two miles from Dr. Garney's, and we proceeded with all the regularity and gravity of Don Quixote to the wished-for villa, and arrived at it after all my fatigues, troubles, and hair-breadth escapes, and falling headlong down the deep Tarpeian rock. The Doctor and his son were out, and not expected home till dinner. When I had related the story of my woes to Mrs. Garney, she was greatly alarmed, and wished much for the Doctor's returning, that he might immediately bleed me, which she insisted was a ceremony necessary to be instantly performed. I agreed in opinion with her; but as the Doctor's coming might not be for two hours, I retired to be brushed, washed, &c. which was absolutely needful, and it much refreshed me. I then desired the favour of a bottle of Madeira, but Mrs. Garney did not approve of it; and, instead of that potation, recommended more hartshorn and water; but I told her that I had, on my arrival, been well provided by her kindness with plenty of
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the watery element, and now really wished for something else, and thought Madeira would do wonders: She shook her head on hearing this, and went out of the room. As I was preparing myself for dinner, she politely sent me the Madeira, and I most eagerly drank a full tumbler of it, and it revived me wonderfully; but prudence prevented my increasing the draught, for by my good will, as I was so thirsty and hot, and the Madeira had gone down so deliciously, I could have finished the bottle; but well it was I did not, for in my hurried state of spirits, and being bruised from head to foot, it might have proved a more certain road to death than any dagger I had ever struck, or any draught of poison I had ever swallowed as a stage patriot for the good of my country.

The Doctor and his son did not return till near four, above two hours after I had arrived on my prancing Bucephalus. I was well refreshed, and my face was in tolerable order, all considered, though it was much scratched and wounded. Mrs. Garney represented my story in most tragical colours; which, had it been so well told before I had drank the Madeira, she might have gained my consent for being bled, as I expected it after the violent fall I had endured: but on growing better, and thinking the Madeira had done every thing that was necessary, all reasons or persuasions were in vain, for I obstinately refused, and said I wished for dinner, and that was preferable to being bled. At last the Doctor's kind intentions yielded to my petulance, and the sight of the good dinner seemed to be the most prevailing argument

gument on all sides; the lancets were changed for knives and forks, and I performed with those weapons more dexterously than I or any person at table expected. We drank Mr. and Mrs. Garrick's health.

The Doctor inquired when my benefit was; I told him:—He asked for tickets, which I could not have thought of carrying there in my pocket, because a gentleman had invited me to dinner. However, he begged leave to present me with three guineas for three box tickets, which I was to send him. I accepted the king's pictures, and of course sent three scraps of paper in exchange. He desired I would come once more before I went to London: I accordingly visited that pleasant hospitable spot again, but it was in a post-chaise, *not on horseback*.—*No more of that—no more of that.*

On my return the horse either walked or went a gentle trot all the way to Portsmouth, and when in the public road, though several gentlemen were returning from their evening's ride, he was as easily conducted as if he had never been obstreperous. Every one was astonished when I related my adventures; and, but that they had a good opinion of my veracity, and seeing the marks on my face, and my naming the waggoners and turnpike-man as witnesses, my story would not have been credited; for the horse was so gentle, and so easily guided, they said that every one must conclude the rider was the most to blame.

The want of judgment in me might in part have been the cause; but from the circumstance
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of the ostler's taking off my spurs, it was evident he treated his riders every now and then with a frolic; and I guess his fall had made him feel pain, and find he was in an error when he cut that caper of enchantment which bereft me of my senses; and had he not had that fall I think he would have finished my career, and effectually have prevented my ever seeing old Portsmouth again.

I do not recollect many particulars relating to this summer campaign worth setting down, so will suppose my Portsmouth engagement ended, and greatly to my advantage: But now, though not an old man, melancholy reflection tells me, that were I to set my foot in that town, there is not one man or woman, gentleman or gentlewoman existing whom I should know.—All gone! gone! But why should I moralize, reflect on, or regret the certain fate of all mankind? Is there a wonder in so well proved a certainty?

Miss Morrison continued at that theatre for some time longer.—Mr. Moody went for London to his new royal engagement; and Miss Kitty White was soon after married to her favourite sailor, Mr. Burden. The mother escorted her youngest daughter, Miss Betsey, to Dublin; as Mr. Barry, by the persuasion of Sir Francis Delaval, had engaged her.

Miss Kitty was a pupil of Mr. Rich's at the same time he was *learning* me and she was taught at his academy for acting, and there began our acquaintance. Mr. Rich took infinite pains in teaching his ladies; Mrs. Stott, late Mrs. Lef-
singham,

ingham, was also a pupil of his in 1756, and made her appearance in Desdemona.

I cannot resist mentioning a little anecdote with which Mrs. Clive and Mr. Garrick were highly entertained; it was related to them by Benjamin Victor, who was at the play on the night it happened at Portsmouth, as follows:

Richard the Third . . . Mr. WILKINSON.
Lady Anne . . . Miss WHITE.

RICHARD.

O take more pity in thine eyes,
And see him here.

Miss White replied,

Would they were *battle-axes* to strike thee dead;

I need not tire the reader by a long story how happy my mother was to see her son, after what she thought a tedious absence.

On my arrival in London I found Mr. Garrick was in town, waited on him, and was received by my good friend as cordially as when I had last seen him at Portsmouth. I had sent him his cloak, for which he poured forth a profusion of thanks, and said Mrs. Garrick must pay for his Portsmouth garment.

At that time I frequently had the honour to breakfast with him; an invitation I would never give or accept but on urgent or very particular occasions: for give me the news-papers and letters, and let me sit sullenly by myself during that ceremony every day.—It is to me a strange invitation,

tation, and may always be given with safety, for I should be sure to refuse it. At one of these breakfasts Mr. Garrick desired me to be ready in *Bajazet* for the annual ceremony at that time of acting *Tamerlane*, with the occasional prologue, at both houses on the 4th and 5th of November.

Mr. Mossop had been inveigled by Barry and Woodward to their new theatre in Crow-street, Dublin, which gave a great shock, and made a considerable chasm and derangement in our affairs of state.

Mr. King was engaged this year from Dublin, and made his appearance in *Tom*, in the *Conscious Lovers*, in October 1759.

Mr. King had not been there since the spring 1750, when the *Roman Father* was brought on the stage, in which he acted *Valerius*; but Mr. Garrick produced Mr. King to the public in 1748 as the *Herald* in *King Lear*, and in the character of *George Barnwell* in 1749.—Garrick's judgment here was not infallible; and as to Mr. King it is no wonder he should not have known which way the true bent of his genius lay, as too frequently is the case. Young performers think of nothing but tragedy: I do not doubt but perseverance would have proved Mr. King an acquisition to the buskin, but Mrs. Chance decided otherwise, and fortunately for the best.—In the comedy of the *Confederacy* he acted *Brass*, of which character the inimitable Churchill takes particular notice; and that gentleman, though so keen and clever in his satires, was not strictly just, which is rather lamentable where strong and superior genius reigns. Mr. King has proved a contradiction

contradiction to his remarks; and, indeed, my very exact explanation relative to myself, before given, evinces I was not the mimic's mimic; for such as it was it certainly was my own, which indeed he afterwards acknowledged, as will be mentioned in proper time and place.

On reviving the comedy of the *Confederacy*, Mr. Garrick one evening sent for me in a great hurry to request, as a test of my regard to oblige him, that I would play Old Mrs. Amlet: He said it struck his thought it might help to strengthen that comedy.—I in duty bound immediately undertook the part.—Miss Pope made her first appearance as a regular stage candidate in *Corinna*, though she had often acted as a child in *Miss in her Teens*, *Lethe*, the *Oracle*, *Lilliput*, &c.

Not acted here these eight years.

Saturday the 27th of October, 1759,

Will be revived

THE CONFEDERACY.

Dick	Mr. PALMER.
Brass	Mr. KING.
Money-trap . .	Mr. YATES.
Clarissa	Mrs. PRITCHARD.
Flippanta . . .	Mrs. CLIVE.

Corinna (for the first time)

By a YOUNG GENTLEWOMAN,

AND

Mrs. Amlet to be attempted by Mr. WILKINSON.

After which the pantomime of

HARLEQUIN RANGER.

It was acted again on Monday the 29th of October.

The

The play was greatly received, and Miss Pope gained much applause, and gave great promise of being (what she is universally acknowledged to be) an excellent performer; and she has from that night to this day been an ornament to the public as an actress of their own rearing, and a credit to the stage as a worthy and amiable private character. I must not forget to add that my Old Mother Amlet was well received, and for some nights repeated, till the Fates called me unexpectedly from thence.

I well remember, on the second night of the Confederacy, Mrs. Clive called Miss Pope into the green room, before her going on the stage as Corinna, and said to her, "My dear Pope," (a sweet appellation indeed from Clive) "you played particularly well on Saturday night as a young actress—now take from me a piece of advice, which I would have every performer attend to;—you acted with great and deserved approbation, but to night you must endeavour to act better, and expect to receive less applause; for if you let your young heart be too sanguine, and rest on the caprice of public commendation or praise, and find yourself disappointed; you will foolishly let it damp your spirits, and you will sink beneath yourself;—therefore take my advice for your proceeding on the stage——"

"The violent thunder of applause last Saturday on your first appearance was not all deserved, it was only benevolently bestowed to give you the pleasing information that they were well delighted, and had their warmest wishes that you would hereafter merit the kindness they bestowed on you."

you." Young performers should remember this lesson, for they are too apt to construe kindness and cherishing into a tribute due to their deserts.

The play of *Tamerlane* was next called, and a few days before that play came to its annual rotation, *Mr. John Moody* made his *entrée* in London (as specified by his articles of war signed at Portsmouth) in the character of King Henry VIII. the night previous to that I acted Mrs. Amlet. Mr. Davies, who was then an actor at Drury-Lane, and who wrote *Mr. Garrick's Life*, and various other pieces, miscellanies, &c. was an old man at that time to me, for I was exactly twenty-one that November: This old gentleman had set his heart on acting *Bajazet*, and when he came one morning to the playhouse and found me rehearsing the part, he was so mortified that he could not contain his spleen, but came into the green-room, and with an affected fit of laughter said, "Ladies and gentlemen, only think what our theatre is come to!—finely lowered indeed! for we have Henry the Eighth acted by John Moody*, and *Bajazet* by an old woman," (meaning Mother Amlet.) On hearing which, I very gravely turned round and said, "And pray, Mr. Davies, why not *Bajazet* by one old woman as well as another?" My old woman's retort to Mr. Davies, as the existing John Moody can witness, was my first stage witicism, and which procured an universal laugh in my favour; besides that of triumph to my friend John

* John Moody, the coachman, in the Journey to London.

Moody and myself, which I am certain he remembers to this day. The play of Tamerlane was still rehearsing, and being then in favour at court, I was summoned by Mr. Holland into Mr. Garrick's dressing-room.—Mr. Garrick said, he wished to hear me repeat some of Bajazet's speeches, in order to rectify my mistakes, which would be easier to me there than if corrected at rehearsal. Mr. Cross, the prompter, was ordered to attend with the play. Mr. Holland, whose part was Monefes, undertook to act the first scene as Tamerlane. Mr. Garrick was in high humour, saying, "Well now, Cross, hey! Why now, this will be too much for my exotic? Hey, Cross, I must do it myself; what say you? Hey now! Cross!" Cross replied, "I am afraid not this year, Sir, as the time is drawing near, and Bajazet is long, and the play must be done next Monday." "Well now, hey Cross! why that is true; but don't you think my brow and eye as Bajazet!—How do you think I should play it?" "O! Sir," said Cross, "like every thing else you do—your Bajazet would be incomparable!"—to which we all bowed and assented. He then acted a speech or two in my first scene, and his look was truly inimitable: "I never shall see his like again." Now my turn came, as he said, for a private docking of luxurious branches, and here follows the proof of Mr. Garrick's favourite wit, which I formerly mentioned. I went on rehearsing with Holland, my master saying "Very well! vastly well indeed, upon my word! Now, now this"—till the middle of the scene, where repeating the long speech of "O glorious thought!"—"Vastly

“Vastly well, bravo!”—till I came to the difficult finishing line—“So now you know my mind, and question me no further,”—*Why bey now, Wilkinson! why this is all shittle-come-sh-te, and my a—e in a handbox.——Here now was I in eager expectation of a t—d as thick as my wrist, and as long as my arm, and d—n it it is all squitter, S :: :: r**.

The delicate reader will skip this leaf, like Sir Clement Flint in the Heiress, yet I hope will pardon it, as I do not insert it for entertainment, but fairly as the indispensable characteristic mirth which Mr. Garrick, with all his understanding, was too apt to give way to; though one of the first geniuses of the world, yet he would descend to such low stuff and ribaldry. Poets may write, and preachers declaim, yet here is a strong picture that the wisest people at times are fools. Nature will take the lead in spite of what they call right, and evince them that men are but children of a larger growth; those who often teach the contrary laugh at you when you believe them, and are sometimes found in equal error with those they austere correct. And it is certainly amazing to the cool reflector on the human mind that Garrick with such idle stuff, could not only highly divert himself, but by the help of his kingly name stamp and pass it as current wit and humour.

I actually aver, that the related strokes of wit from Mr. Garrick's spontaneous and wonderful

* Mr. King was there.

fancy were retail theatrical jokes for a week or month following; that, on my rehearsing with Mr. Garrick, Mr. Holland judged it so comical, that he had never done with the joke: and so fashionable was it, that not only the gentlemen, but the ladies, and those that were most delicate, all professed admiration and strong appetite for Garrick's jests on Wilkinson. Mr. Cadwallader in the Author declares, he eat the prince's soup out of compliment, though it was as bitter as gall and as black as his hat—still says—"d——n his soup."

As a relater of facts, I cannot omit, in regard to Mr. Garrick's amazing care of me as a manager, I was then really ignorant of the art of properly lining my face with Indian ink; he not only gave a particular charge to Mr. Johnson, the house-keeper, who possessed judgment in those matters, but attended in person by half past five, not merely to assist and see that it was done, but corrected and gave the finishing strokes of the pencil himself, and helped to improve my face with the necessary red and white, and the yellow ochre; (but this is letting the reader too far into our stage mysteries;) and certainly such attention from a person of his rank and real independence, was careful, pleasing, encouraging, and kind. I thanked him for it.

My Bajazet, upon the word of a gentleman, was better than well received: I was perfect to a T, or, as a very old stager would term it, *quite rotten in the part*. However, to attempt Bajazet when I was but twenty years old, and finish it with approbation, certainly gave promise for the young

young racer, though no jockey. Mr. Quin had been the Bajazet, and was allowed excellent, and then well remembered.—Barry was in full fame, and Mossop not forgot in that character; but still there were, at Drury-Lane, only Wilkinson and Davies left at that juncture for Bajazet, Holland being the Monefes.

Mr. Foote at that time had not any engagement, and Mr. Garrick really *acted* the being offended with him so well, and Mr. Rich kept his *natural* stupidity so obstinately, that Mr. Foote was reduced from the pressure of his wants and bad state of his finances, by way of immediate relief to his necessities, to advertise a comic lecture at the Haymarket theatre early in December. My curiosity naturally prompted me to attend his performance; but lest I should be negligent, Mr. Garrick sent for me to rub up my attention, fearing I might like a lazy centinel sleep on my post: He ordered me in strong terms to be there in time, to be very attentive, and to bring him a just account.

The lecture was rather defective and lame, but in that whimsical delivery and oratorical situation Foote was unrivalled, as he had great spirit, judgment, fire, and volubility, was very equal and collected in a situation so perilous and difficult. In the first act of his oration he evinced all these shining qualities, but he had not taken leisure, nor prepared himself by any means with sufficient matter for such a night's entertainment as was expected, and all to be done by himself.

It was too rash, too unadvis'd, and
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
 E'er one can say it lightens.

He was wonderfully happy as the *rising* but not as the *setting sun*; for it was not a glorious but a cloudy and darkened hemisphere.—However, he was recompensed for his trouble, and cheered by seeing all his friends, and a crowded theatre at the full prices as now paid at the playhouses. One of his remarks was levelled against the combined theatres, urging, that several veteran actors might be seen walking the streets at noon picking their useless teeth.

Another was levelled at Mr. Rich, who was fond of Roman triumphs, ovations, &c. also Italian burlettas; in one of which there was a sneezing duet: He said, that *that* bright manager's time was too busily employed either to admit him or the destitute Minor in his hand, (alluding to his then new-written farce of that name) as it was wholly occupied in shewing,

How the old Romans dress'd,
 And the modern Romans sneez'd.

And that Garrick was too careful to allow, if possible, any writers existing even from the crumbs of his table; so that with that penurious gentleman no author could hope either for subsistence or encouragement.

The second part of his lecture failed in every essential point, and all his former satire and sting had left neither prejudice nor effect to serve any purpose whatever—Too often the error of our
 modern

modern play-writers. How charming are the two or three first acts of Mr. Cumberland's *Choleric Man*? but how different, or rather indifferently different, are the latter? That and other modern comedies, put me in mind of Congreve's last tag to the *Old Bachelor*.

All couriers the first heat with vigour run,
But 'tis with whip and spur the race is won.

It may be difficult, without doubt, to sustain and rise superior in the fifth act, but that it is to be achieved is unanswerably proved, whenever the *Provoked Husband*, the *Beaux Stratagem*, the *Suspicious Husband*, and the *Wonder* are acted: In laughter, glee, and spirit, they rise evidently to the last. It must be admitted, that in modern comedies the players, as usual, are brought all together for the purpose of moralizing at the conclusion, but to very little purpose regarding the entertainment of the audience, except its being a kind of jog to the nodding auditory, and the hinting it is near bed time, and a good preparatory lull for their night's repose; and in consequence going out of the theatre half asleep, half awake, it must frequently prove dangerous to many of his Majesty's good subjects, particularly in frosty weather, as we all know the purlieus of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden are slippery ways, and at best require wary walking: Therefore an author should always endeavour, as far as practicable, to make his last act resemble a good disposition when bestowing favours, as experience tells me that, be he ever so bountiful,

unless the last gift is surpassing the first, the ungrateful receiver will feel chagrined and disappointed, and return sulky acknowledgments, or more probably no thanks at all. But, alas! it is easy to correct, and to assume coxcomb-like criticism—As—

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.

So the second part of Mr. Foote's lecture was like a bad fifth act in a play: he was exhausted, and felt but little of his former self; he seemed to have no resource, and was reduced to beg leave to sit down at a table with two candles, and read his new piece called the Minor, which he then wanted to bring on the stage, and that was in a mutilated, unprepared state; even for the closet it was almost incomprehensible, and, as it may be supposed, suffered much by being read to such disadvantage; though enforced by Mr. Foote, yet it was very languid to a large audience.

He soon found the forced experiment weighed as heavy on himself as on his hearers, he therefore broke up the assembled court rather abruptly, apologized for the hurry with which he had taken the liberty to convene them together, and finished with an assurance of making considerable alterations and additions against the next essay, of which he would give timely notice.—He bowed and departed, neither with tokens of approbation or disgust, for each party seemed pleased with the release.—The audience retired apparently contented with such fare as they had partaken of,
but

but not by any means wishing to sit down again to the same dish.

Mr. Foote must have been perfectly convinced of this, for he never again offered to try their palates, fearing, I suppose, it would not have suited their tastes, but have been ordered away with tokens of disgust.

When the lecture was over I posted to the theatre, and as full of my packet of news as poor Scrub, eagerly got to Mr. Garrick's room, where he was waiting, all impatience, and Colonel Keppel with him, both in full dress, it having been a gala day at St. James's, where they had been paying their respects.

I dare say several country readers will doubt my authenticity, when I mention Mr. Garrick's having been at Court; but they may depend upon it that the information to those who live in London would not cause any wonder, or be a matter of the least surprise, as the patentees of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, not only go publicly to Court at St. James's, but if they were to neglect that ceremony, at least occasionally, as on birth-days, &c. it would be taken notice of, judged a remissness, and not respectful. Mr. Foote, as patentee at the Hay-Market, always went to Court, where the first nobility were as glad to see him as any other acquaintance or intimate friend.

I not observing Mr. Garrick to be so fully equipped with *chapeau bras* under his arm, and Colonel Keppel the same, my thoughts were carried from their proper channel, and I entered the apartment so precipitately, and was so eager

like a post-messenger to deliver my credentials, that I forgot to take off my hat, but let it remain like a stubborn proud quaker, on its right place, the head. This was not from a rude habit, quite the contrary; but in my hurry and ardent desire to prove my loyal zeal to king David, I had really never thought of it. Mr. Garrick very kindly gave me a wink and a slight pull, and pointed at my head; I was quickly sensible of my error and apologized for it, which Colonel Keppel laughed at very heartily, and said, "He was sure it was from a hurry of spirits;" then sat down as eager as Garrick to hear the news relative to Foote's lecture; for he was a sincere friend of Garrick's—to Foote of course the contrary. After an hour's conversation, with some of Garrick's stories, and his damning Foote very heartily, we parted. In two or three days after, I was summoned to a cabinet council in Southampton-Street: I found Foote's abuse in his lecture had not digested, but sat very heavy on my manager's proud stomach. Mr. Garrick said, "He had just received certain information, that the d—d fellow Foote was engaged with Barry and Woodward, for Dublin, and had actually set forward that very day."—"Now," says Garrick, "My dear Tate, now you see I have such a regard for you, that I cannot omit any opportunity of doing you a service. I am given to understand you owe much to the good folks of Dublin for the favourable respect and regard that many persons there have shewn you, for the which you should hold them in great good will. Now, I have consulted to make your fortune, and

and I will consent to your going to Ireland immediately, and to your staying there till the end of February or March; that is, you see, provided you give your word and honour to me you will not on any account accept any terms whatever, or be prevailed on to act with Barry and Woodward."

This proposal I relished as much as Mr. Garrick wished. I promised to be guided as he desired: I was quite elated with the scheme, and was all alive, and in tip top spirits at the thoughts of seeing dear Dublin again, and all my good friends there. I returned Mr. Garrick a thousand thanks for his gracious furlough.

I took that opportunity of asking for the money for his Portsmouth cloak, which, notwithstanding the honour of often breakfasting with him, I had not yet received, though the sum was not enormous, being only three guineas: it was elegantly made for the price; and he frequently walked the theatrical deck of his royal man of war graced in that snug covering. "But, now, well," said he, "I suppose you think now—hey, that you are never to be paid for this d——d cloak;" which was in fact expecting I should have replied with, "My good Sir, your kindness is such, that I should esteem myself highly honoured by your acceptance of such a trifling present." But I knew my man too well, and was certain that his good breeding would not have put me to the trouble of a second offer; for without more ceremony he would have accepted of it. After breakfast Mrs. Garrick immediately withdrew, for still the house affairs would draw her hence—
and

and he poor man had not, he declared, such an immense sum in his own custody; but on the day mentioned for Dublin. hoy, he sent the servant for it to Mrs. Garrick, and paid me the mighty sum—I do not know if *with all his heart*; but I know I took it (as Mrs. Trapes does the capuchin in the Beggar's Opera) *with all my soul*.

I informed my lady mother of my unexpected trip, she did not like the thoughts of the sea for her wise son; but trusting, as she ever did, to the sole Guider of all things, she mustered a resolution, and prepared for my journey and voyage, as I was obliged to go in four or five days.

On the night I was to depart in the Chester fly, having had a porter to cord my boxes before I went to the play, on my return to take leave of my mother and not to depart without the good blessing, to my surprise I had locked up all my cash in the boxes, and had not near sufficient in my pocket to reach Dublin: I did not wish to unpack my mail-trunk till I had got to Holy-Head, where the officers of the custom would per force view and feel the contents. I had at noon *only* left sufficient for three months, for my mother, which was ever my first care after I was so enabled to prove my duty. It was near eleven o'clock when I discovered my error, and I had no remedy but to unpack, or the having recourse to my good Mr. Garrick, for I was to be in the coach by twelve—I therefore made haste to Southampton-Street—rapped aloud, and had the honour of admittance. He feared, on seeing me that some misfortune had happened: I got
but

but just in time to save my distance, for he was in his night-cap, and said, in about fifteen minutes he should have been in bed. I told him the accident, and said I should really be much obliged to him for fifteen guineas, which he declared he was glad I wanted, as it gave him an opportunity to prove how willing he was to oblige me, and actually would not let me by any means take less than twenty: and, if in drawing an exact copy, as far as I can judge of the human heart, I do believe I was welcome to the sum in the humour he was then in, even had he never received it again. When I represent a picture of oddities annexed to genius, do not let me ungenerously not feel and declare how well he here bestowed; and I dare aver with sincerity, he at times did generous actions, and liked they should be known. But our minds are wavering in common life, and when we consider the more his astonishing discernment discried and proved the difficulties he had to surmount, no wonder it in some degree spoiled perhaps a good mind, had he been placed in any other situation; veracity demands this complimentary truth to his memory.

Mr. Garrick was an actor on the stage of life; and on the stage itself he was not the actor, but life's exact mirror he held to public view. I here submissively bow to the reader, and seriously intreat the lady, or gentleman to believe, that a tribute paid to the merit of Mr. Garrick, by my bad pen, gives me more satisfaction than any contrary mark of character could do: But I am here giving a faithful account of facts, incidents,

&c.

&c. and before I have finished, I flatter myself I have not inserted any thing which may impeach my gratitude to that gentleman on a summary view, from the beginning till I shall arrive at the sum total, or but what will prove, if I have wrote a little evil in brass, I have not wrote his good with water.

If the reader wonders at my want of cash when I made this application, it was owing to the mistake and the time of the night, and urgency made the necessity; for I was then an actor, and not that great insignificant character a *poor* manager.—Money that I did not immediately want, my mother, at my request, always put into the stocks.

Mr. Garrick would have been unhappy had I lost a day, so eager was he for my expedition in every sense of the word. I left my lodgings in Half-Moon-Street, (now more genteelly termed Little Bedford-Street) and was carefully conveyed to Chester, and from there to Holy-Head, thence in a storm, accompanied as usual with a violent illness, I at length safe arrived to view that very beautiful situation of Dublin Bay; and as illuminations and rejoicings for great events cannot be commemorated unless the day be ascertained—know then, after an intolerable sickness, in Greece I landed about ten o'clock on Wednesday, December 26, 1759. This was to me a happy landing; and as I was going in a hackney coach to my lodgings, I thought I recollected the figure of a lady I knew, and on stopping the carriage, who should it be but my dear Mrs. White, who was come over with her youngest

youngest daughter, sister to the Miss Kitty White who was with me at Portsmouth.

My favourite old lady, was thus haranguing Mr. Younger, who that year was at Crow-Street theatre, and pointing with dignity to a play bill, "Sir, you have not used my daughter Bess well, 'pon my *sould*, and Barry has kept her in Love's last Shift ever since she came.—There is a bill with *Sylvia* at the bottom by that d—d devil, Mrs. Dancer.—Now, Sir, the poor dear creature wants the breeches parts, and if she has them not, Mr. Barry will have his benches pulled.—Ask Mr. Barry what he thinks my daughter came over to Ireland for?—Then if you do not know, I will tell you Sir—The breeches parts Sir! and she expects *all* the breeches parts Sir—and now you know Bet's mind."—To me, the remembrance of this odd whimsical lady is a treat, and I am not single in my opinion, as Lord Miltown, Lord Clanbrassil, Sir Francis Delaval, Mr. Foote, and others, used to be so entertained with my telling the incidents of her *outré* character, as occasioned me and Mrs. Abington's acting two parts on the stage for the purpose.

The old lady's lecture being over, and seeing me, she roared out, "O you devil, Tate! is it you? Kit wrote me word you was coming. Come open the door and let me into the coach, and go with me to Bet—she will be delighted to see you." She ordered the coachman to stop next door to Ryan's tavern, near Crow-Street theatre, and being safely set down, we found Miss Betsey at home, and with her a Counsellor Barret,

Barret, whom I soon perceived had a strong penchant for her.

Well, after my introduction to the Counsellor, and some *hot wind 'pon my sould*, for 'Tate after his sea voyage, all was laugh and harmony, and "as music has charms to sooth the savage breast," (but here was an instance not to Congreve's credit, for it was quite the reverse) Mr. Barret, as he was traversing to and fro, unfortunately took up the violin, and quickly played the Black Joke; the old lady's eyes were instantly inflamed, and a violent storm arose, which hung with impregnant clouds that hovered over our heads, and burst at last in thunder and impetuous showers.

"*Muster* Barret, Sir, no more of that tune Sir! I won't suffer that tune of *dol-di-di-dily*, for it's b—dy, Sir; I am thrill'd thro'out when I hear it—for it's b—dy, Sir!"—"But, my dear Ma'am," says the Counsellor—"My dear devil!"—says the lady—"Don't dear me! the poor girl could not sleep all last night for that d—mn—n tune."—"Mamar! mamar!" says the poor innocent creature, "what is *dol-di-di-dily*, mamar?"—"Go to sleep ma'am."—"Mamar! mamar!" again says she, with all the innocence in the world, "pray tell me what is *dol-di-di-dily*?"—"Why ma'am, since you must know, it's b—dy, ma'am; and now I hope you are answered." Poor innocent creature she did not know what b—dy was. "So let me hear no more of *dol-di-di-dily*."

The daughter here ventured to soften matters, She was sure Mr. Barret meant no harm with

dol-di-di-dily;

dol di-di-dily; when her mother turned about and with an alarming voice cried out—"O you eternal limb! I'll fells you ma'am,"—and indeed she was almost as good as her word, for she slapped her face most violently, screaming out at the same time, "Was ever mother so chill'd thro'fout!"—the daughter tragically on her knees pulling her mother's petticoats, who was declaring for England ho!—Myself and Mr. Barret endeavouring to separate the young sobbing suppliant and the enraged heroine—Mr. Barret's face by no means escaped her nails, or what the old gentlewoman termed *tremendours flaps*, till the entrance of a couple of fine boiled towels, with celery sauce, roast beef, and some mince pies, which the Counsellor had ordered from Ryan's, produced a wonderful effect; for anger gave way to hunger, and rage subsided for the different passions—She kissed Bet, she kissed Tate—she laughed and said to Mr. Barret—"Go you devil and wash your face with brandy, it is the most sovereignest thing in the world, for a scratcht face 'pon my sould, and then come and get your dinner." The Counsellor yielded to the enforced law of brandy, and promising never to play *dol-di-di-dily* again, we made as good a quartetto as I ever remember.

Dinner was scarce removed when a *rat-tat* was heard at the door, and in came Mrs. Kennedy breathless and exprefs from Mr. Barry, with the news that Mr. Dancer had expired that day at noon. The play intended for that evening was *Romeo and Juliet*, and as Miss White was
studied

studied in the part, Mr. Barry begged she would play it, and instantly attend him at the theatre to rehearse. "Ay, that she shall," cried the old lady, "for Bet has been in Love's last Shift the whole winter, poor creature! and has had nothing else to comfort her; but now Bess has a good thing to do—she shall shew what acting is 'pon my soul!"—Off they went to the theatre; and as Mrs. Dancer could not appear, an apology was made, and I saw Miss White play Juliet. I must explain by the old lady's Last Shift, that Miss White had made her first appearance, and played one part only that season, which was Amanda, in Cibber's comedy of that name.

Counsellor Barret lost no time in declaring his passion; for in about six weeks the bar orator pleaded his cause so urgently and successfully, that Miss Betsey allured by his fiddle attraction of *dol-di-di-dily*, eloped with him one morning whilst her tender *mamma* was slumbering to that wakeful nightingale her *nose*; and before the clock had struck ten, the holy priest had made those two in one, and they were fast married. He had a genteel fortune; but his lady did not prove true unto his bed I believe, for he sent her to a nunnery, (a very improper place) where not liking penance, she soon finished her short career, sickened, pined, and died. On the morning they eloped the good old lady burst suddenly into my bed-chamber, tore open the curtains, and demanded her daughter from out of my bed: but my assurances of innocence as to any knowledge of her maiden, pacified her
by

by degrees, and off she set to search some other young man's bed; for that, it seemed, was the place she had ascertained as the most probable to find her daughter Bess. This truly original character was born at Hull: I apprehend the natural acuteness of Yorkshire air, polished and refined by the allowed elegant breeding of St. Giles's, gave the extraordinary finish to the *tout ensemble* of this truly original slip slop character.

Mrs. Dancer soon as possible played again, as her absence reduced Barry to the most pressing necessities, which being properly and submissively laid before her, she melted and pitied his lamentable situation, and generously flew to his relief. At this period Mr. Mossop's tragical powers were added to those of Mr. Barry's, and these, united, of course were attractive.

Mr. Mossop's departure from Drury-Lane, was partly occasioned by an affront he took from Mr. Garrick's appointing Mr. Mossop to act Richard, as we will suppose this night, and his first and best character, which stood well against Mr. Garrick's, though not so artfully and finely discriminated, and at the same time the manager secured a command from the Prince of Wales for the night following; so that when Mr. Mossop had finished Richard with remarkable credit in February 1759, to his astonishment the Mr. Palmer of that age stepped forward and said, "To-morrow night, by command of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, (his present Majesty) King Richard III. King Richard, by Mr. Garrick." It gave a great damp to what
Mrs

Mr. Mossop had just finished ; it certainly was galling, and proved duplicity and ill-nature, as well as envy.

I had a letter pointedly in my favour from Mr. Garrick to a Mr. Wilks, who had just then finished a history of the Irish stage, and had paid Mr. Garrick most lavish compliments. Mr. Wilks was very kind when I visited him, and presented me with his book, which I have carefully preserved.

To shew how easily Mr. Garrick would let trifles vex him, he used frequently to correspond with a Mr. Swan of York ; who, like Mr. Rich, thought himself the only reader or judge of Shakspeare's Othello : he had been an actor, and acting manager many years before in Dublin ; but not remembered as Mr. Viator observes : for the Dublin stage being in such dreadful order till after the year 1740, when Mr. Sheridan (son of Dr. Sheridan, and father to our present shining ornament, of the English senate and the English stage) became the undaunted reformer of every flagrant abuse. Mr. Swan, after having at York taught Mr. Jackson, now the Edinburgh manager, how to undraw the curtain in his favourite balcony scene, (never acted but by his direction) said to a gentleman of the theatre, now in York in a very respectable situation—"No man understands Othello but myself."—"No!" says the gentleman—"What do you think of Mr. Garrick?"—"O! by G—d the man is not adequate to it—for he has neither learning nor understanding equal to the task." This foolish trifling circumstance was repeated to Mr. Moody ;
who,

who, when in London, seeing Mr. Swan's letters to Mr. Garrick, wherein he paid great adulation to his judgment, told the ridiculous circumstance, as a proof of that gentleman's duplicity. Mr. Garrick after that received several letters from Mr. Swan, but never answered one.

On the evening of my arrival in Dublin, December 26, 1759, I had a message from Mr. Brown, the manager of Smock-alley theatre, with an invitation to supper: We soon agreed, for he did not know I was bound not to act at the other theatre, so all I asked was granted, and preliminaries were settled with the utmost harmony, and the night fixed for my first mounting the stage. But before I enter on the circumstances attending my own skill on this adventure, it will be necessary, as an historian, to inform the reader respecting many alterations that had occurred in the meridian of Dublin since my first attempt on that stage, in December 1757, and what I am now to mention was in January, 1760. All, or most of my theatrical readers, have doubtless been informed of the state of the Dublin theatres, from books, relators, or experience; but a short information for strangers to those points in general is, I think, in some degree here necessary.

When I acted with Mr. Foote, in 1757, the expences were on a narrow scale, but on a more solid and secure foundation than in 1760; or I fear than at present, 1790. Indeed, in this year, the theatre is honoured with a patent; yet like the expensive cones of Cherburgh, I fear the profit

fit is still far back, many storms assault, and sometimes in want of regular supplies; the garrison not loyal, and the inside of the *genii* palace very melancholy; not all well within, though adorned with false glanc and enterprife. Indeed, to keep a Dublin or a York theatre, and gain the attention of a fickle audience, greedy for variety, and soon fatiated, must be attended with expence and fatigue of mind, beyond the possible idea of an auditor; and though great receipts do at particular times happen, yet the very ill success that drags on for want of ability, before the sudden spring tide sets the crazy vessel afloat, makes the Captain Manager too well acquainted with that hard labour the vulgar term—*working for a dead horse*.—I am sure I can tell the Dublin manager I speak this feelingly, but not as an agreeable *truth*; and if I am wrong in my supposition of him, I beg his pardon, and wish him joy of his arduous situation.

Now Mr. Sheridan in 1757 was the manager of a good theatre, with decent wardrobe, scenery, &c.—His plays acted with exactness, propriety, and regularity, and with every necessary embellishment.

A LIST of his COMPANY.

MEN.—Mr. Sheridan;—Mr. Foote;—Mr. King;—Mr. Heaphy;—Mr. Glover;—Mr. Hurst;—Mr. Kennedy;—Mr. Isaac Sparks;—Mr. Wilkinson, and others.—WOMEN.—Mrs. Fitzhenry;—Mrs. Kennedy;—Miss Grace Phillips;

lips ;—Miss Philips ;—Mrs. Heaphy ;—Mrs. Glover ;—Mrs. Pye, and others.

Mr. Sheridan then did not gain any enormous sum, though he was in universal esteem, and beloved as a gentleman, and an actor of great ability. At times he had very beneficial seasons. His charge for a benefit was only 40*l*.—Now, on my arrival in 1760, Mr. Barry's charges were with difficulty, and I believe loss, continued at 60*l*. Mr. Barry and Mr. Woodward, by raising a subscription, had a new, extensive, and more elegant theatre ; and new brooms sweep clean. They opened that theatre in October, 1758 ; but it was loaded with not less than sixty subscribers tickets. When Woodward and Barry first acted, great sums were received, but it was but the vision of an hour ; for the number of auditors were confined when compared to those of London, and as John Moody says, *they could not haud it, they could not haud it.*

Mr. Sheridan that year, after endeavouring to rally forces, and make way against the stream of Fashion, found the current too strong, was obliged to quit his ship, as the old crazy theatrical vessel threatened instant sinking, and from the ruins of which the very rats had run ; he found himself deserted by Mr. King and Mrs. Fitzhenry, who went over to the foe : so he took the first opportunity of a fair wind and retreated, not deeming himself——

Arm'd with self-sufficient merit
To take the field against a host of foes.

For

For as Hudibras says—

He who fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day;
But he who is in battle slain,
Will never rise to fight again.

The first year seemed to promise Barry and Woodward success. To Barry it was not so material being in debt, for that never disturbed his rest. Woodward's disposition was quite the contrary, for his dinner, good or bad, would not digest unless he was certain it was paid for.—He was an economist in the strictest sense of the word—He had secured a little fortune quite sufficient for that enviable state, *independency*; his income at Drury-Lane having been affluent with great benefits for several years, and a darling of the public from boxes to the galleries. But with a grand view for gain, he unfortunately experienced a total change. He had quitted luxury, riches, and ease, and was playing in Dublin with vexation, danger, and slavery, in a comparative view, and one mishap after another in perpetual succession. The nights when Barry and Woodward did not act the houses were so bad as to cause a woeful drawback.

Crow-street seemed on the first onset to promise well; but Barry was himself a very luxurious Marc Antony to support; and the other house in Smock-alley, though contemptible in a comparative view, yet was often galling, and pricked the sides of royalty; for Barry and Woodward were appointed masters of the Revels, which gave them the power of dubbing their new house

royal;

royal ; but the Lord Mayor at that time had the power to licence what theatres he judged proper ; yet Woodward found it impossible, and a more difficult task than he imagined, to crush what he at first looked on as a very contemptible, weak enemy ; yet weak and malicious enemies can sometimes pour in strength, and often create uneasiness and perplexity.

The revival of Douglas at the old house, by Mr. Digges and Mrs. Ward—also getting plays occasionally bespoke—benefits artfully given to public charities, and well-known genteel families in distress, but above all beginning their principal benefits in the height of the season against the strongest plays of their opponents, certainly greatly hurt their consequence, destroyed Woodward's rest, and lowered Barry's fame, which stood aloft, and looked disdain and terror on the host of scattered scarecrows beneath him ; yet these inevitable strokes could not be parried.

But on some of those nights, when Barry, Woodward, Mrs. Fitzhenry, and Mrs. Dancer, did all unite, with an excellent company, and exerted their best abilities, have they performed to a middling house ; while the other has had a full theatre, on some popular occasion, to an ill-acted play, with dirty clothes and scenes, and a dismally bad-lighted theatre.—Indeed I have known even in London, when Mr. Rich has revived an old pantomime tagged to a vile-acted play, that Garrick has trembled ; and I have heard him remark, that if they came to a tragedy at Drury-Lane from want of admittance by an overflow of Covent-Garden, they were not in humour the whole

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night, as the grown masters and misses were disappointed of seeing the puppet-show, and were deprived of their rattle.—I must mention all that incredible rage for pantomime in London is now, to the credit of the audience, no more, but it comes in very properly as a relief;—but thirty-five years ago, to Harlequin Sorcerer, the doors were obliged to be opened at three o'clock, and were at times broke open, so eager were the million for admittance.

In the Dublin struggle, Barry and Woodward met with inconceivable and unforeseen perplexities; they had recourse to their powerful set of friends, particularly to ladies of quality, to add their names to their strong plays, which had certainly irresistible charms: but this could not always last; however that, and then beginning their own benefits gave a total overthrow to the enemy, who were so tattered and so mean in their attire, that “their executors the greedy crows, flew hovering o’er their heads impatient of their lean inheritance,” they were obliged then to submit to the fate of war and shut up the playhouse, while Barry rode triumphant in his gilded car, and swept all before him: Nor did he, that I ever heard, send them dinners and apparel, but, like Mr. Bayes’s troops, supposed them all dead men. Barry and Woodward closed early in June 1759, opened again in October, and thought Dublin their own; but November had not elapsed before they had authentic intelligence that an army lay concealed: But as they were poor do not think the army in disguise were as lucky as Mr. Bayes’s, where we are informed all the innkeepers were thei,

their friends. Indeed Barry and Woodward this year were, by wishing to do too much, the cause of their own destruction: they had offered Mossop, as I have related, great terms, and bribed him from Drury-Lane; and here they certainly were wrong, for Mossop would never have left the first situation in Drury-Lane on any chance (or even certainty) and join a banditti, to perform in a theatre so destitute of every article whatever, to have opposed their handsome well-provided theatre in all points. However they had him there. Mr. Mossop being bred a gentleman, also the son of one, and having had a Dublin college education, he was universally known and in high esteem, and was then thought by every one prudent and of an economical turn, but lived very genteelly: It was difficult to decide that season which was the greatest favourite with the ladies as a tragedian, Barry or Mossop; which was strange, as Barry was not only far superior, professionally, but was the only actor for really making love I ever saw; but Mossop added to much sterling merit and the firmness of voice for strength and clearness, that double attraction, novelty. But the audience unfortunately will not always judge as the players do, but assert their undoubted right of pleasing themselves.

I should like audiences to approve as I wished them, and believe there are other managers would like, seriously speaking, the same; and yet, in a general view, unless on riotous doings, Garrick had a wonderful power of that kind over his hearers, as they mostly held him invaluable, and

put great faith in what he recommended to their sanction and good opinion.

A list of the principal performers in the two companies in Dublin, January 1760.

Crow-Street.

MEN.—Barry, Mossop, Sowden, Jefferson, Walker, Woodward, Macklin, Foote, Vernon, Dexter, Heaphy.—WOMEN.—Dancer, Fitzhenry, Kennedy, &c.

Smock-Alley.

MEN.—Brown, Ryder, Wilkinson, Staley, Heaton, and Hurst.—WOMEN.—Mrs. Abington, Ibbott, Philips, and Ryder.

Now the reader, if not theatrical, will better understand what I had to encounter on my arrival. Mr. Brown was the desperate manager of Smock-alley theatre; he had been in much esteem as an actor and a gentleman at Bath and Edinburgh—once attempted Richard at Drury-Lane, but was barely permitted to finish the part—He had been in the army, and was well known by most of the officers; was a most pleasing well-behaved companion, was very indolent, a second Digges for extravagance, was much in debt in England and in Dublin, and it was very immaterial to him if he failed as manager, for he could not be poorer; and though it might put a stop to more credit, he was so well beloved they never pressed him to any distress, for as they knew money he had

had not, to lock him up was inflicting cruelty that could not answer any good purpose. His Copper Captain was so much approved that it always brought money; Woodward's was thought very inferior, nor could he keep that play on a par against Brown, with all the striking advantages his theatre and company possessed:—Our theatre was, as before described, and looked like a dungeon. Mrs. Abington (who was then of no note) had, three or four years before that November, played a few parts at Bath, (when Mr. Brown was manager) also at Richmond, and some chance plays with Theophilus Cibber in the summer, by permission of the Lord Chamberlain, in the Haymarket, and had been engaged in 1759 at Drury-Lane at thirty shillings per week. Mrs. Abington had performed Dorcas in the Mock Doctor, &c. but Mr. Garrick not perceiving her merit, or in fear that encouragement would be for claiming advancement of terms, did not seem inclined to introduce that lady to advantage before the public:—But my then intimate friend, Mrs. Abington, formed a better opinion of her own deserts, and thinking Mr. Garrick intended injury, instead of acting friendly, she, without ceremony, suddenly eloped in December to her former manager and old acquaintance Mr. Brown, who had hired Smock-alley theatre at a trifling rent of Dr. Wilson: He had wrote to her on his new acquired honours, and assured her of the choice of every leading character whatever, if she would quit her then indifferent Drury-Lane engagement: Mrs. Abington had arrived about fourteen days before me, and had acted with good

and gracious reception ; but not having the London stamp of consequence, was only spoke of as really a very clever woman. My terms were settled at shares after 20l. and a clear benefit, with three weeks notice whenever I should choose to appoint my night. Mr. Garrick, in his act of grace, had left me what is termed a creep-hole out of the act of parliament ; for he had not desired me to make it a provincial attack in what was then termed my way, by ridiculing Barry, Mossop, Woodward, &c. being assured my eagerness to do it was sufficient ; but here he was mistaken, for under so good a theatrical guide as himself, I must have been a stupid hound indeed not to have learned instinctively a small portion of sagacity ; and he did not doubt but I should be led by natural error into an eagerness for the sport, without my paying any attention to the being right or wrong : but I had, with a little maturity, attained some experience and observation : and on ruminating on what had, and what might happen, and not by any means approving my Drury-Lane engagement, nor relying too much on a great man's promise, and doubting of terms to please me for the following year, the seeds of rebellion were scattered in my heart and promised growth.—It presently on reflection convinced me, if I made the managers of Crow-street my enemies, I was not only acting as a fool, but also as a tool to accomplish Mr. Garrick's purposes, which would throw me back entirely into his power, as I should exclude myself by so doing from all resource in the capital theatres ; and though I felt and glowed as the Alexander and the Lear of
Portsmouth,

Portsmouth, still my connections and attachments to the great world made me only relish country retreats by way of relaxation, and as a man of consequence appertaining to the royal theatres, not as a constant resident of a provincial community : Therefore, if by attempting to appear with great eclat, I quitted all hopes of the substance by preferring the shadow, it would put an effectual bar to all my self-flattering hopes of future prosperity, and by pleasing two or three audiences might create a bundle of bitter, lasting, and implacable enemies ; yet while I preserved my engagement for the winter of any consequence as a public character in either London or Dublin, it was security for a good profitable reception for the summer in the country, either in England or Ireland.

It so happened I was the first who had explored from London into the depths of country play-houses ; in consequence the success was much more secure, profitable, and blazing, than it would be in the present times : as now every principal actor and actress's merit is as well understood and declaimed upon at the *Half Moon* or any other public-house, as if one of their own breed ; almost every theatrical star having deigned to shine in all the principal theatres in the three kingdoms.

Now, in point of imitation, Mr. Foote was fair game, and allowed to be so even by the good company he was then engaged with at Crow-street.

My first appearance at Smock-alley that year was on Friday, January 4, 1760—Much Ado

about Nothing---Benedick, Mr. Brown; Beatrice, Mrs. Abington---With (never acted in this kingdom) The Diversions of the Morning; which I acted at Drury-Lane the season before for my own benefit---Foote brought out a piece against me, which luckily failed?—He acted Lady Pentweazle in the first act as I did; in the second act he expected to do a great deal with his Tragedy A-la-Mode, but not having any person to relieve him, and trying the paste-board figures, it was with difficulty that part was suffered to finish: though after that time it did great matters at the Haymarket; but never so well as when we acted it together---he the author, and myself, dressed as the tragedy actor, was Golcondas the hero. The papers of next day gave the following account, I suppose from Mr. Brown the director.

“ Last night, TASTE; or, The Diversions of the Morning, was performed at the theatre in Sinock-alley. The uncommon applause with which it was received, spoke the merit of the principal performer, and by particular desire will be performed again on Monday next.

“ To Mr. SAUNDERS, Printer.

“ SIR,

“ I SEND you an extract of a letter I found in Sycamore-alley this morning, which, as it contains theatrical news, may afford some entertainment. The original you or any one may see at any

any time ; but as the cover was lost, I knew not to whom to return it.

James's-street, " I am your humble servant,
16 Jan. 1760. " ZACH. JOHNSON."

" I have detached Foote's pupil to help you to
" pull down those mighty Kings. God send he
" may have better success than the Ostrich ; for
" that, I am told, never drew enough to pay its
" freight. He is all I can spare at present ; a d---d
" clever fellow, and will work their buff. If he
" should fail he will be no loser, for he is conti-
" nued on my pay. I beg you will be kind to
" him.---These cursed burletta people I took from
" Marybone have done nothing ; I wish the devil
" had them. For God's sake let me know if you
" think they would go down in Dublin, and I will
" hustle them off to you immediately. Tell the
" poor people to keep up their spirits, for they
" may depend upon every assistance that can be
" spared by, &c."

Before the performance I received a message from Mr. Barry with proposals for an engagement, which it was impossible to accept.---Foote said,
" D---n the pug ! what can he do against me ?
" he is as ignorant as a whore's maid."

All my numerous good friends in Dublin were daily increasing, yet they much feared it would be impossible for me to succeed to any thing like advantage with such an indifferent company, and in so shabby a theatre ; Mr. Ryder standing confessedly a good actor, but neither he nor Mrs.

Abington had then rose to their well-deserved estimation ; but my acquaintance assured me of their concurrence to support me.

On the morning of my first performance, a gentleman, (Mr. Coates) a subscriber, very intimate and warm in the interest of Crow-street theatre, said, he waited on me at the desire of his friends, Messrs. Barry and Woodward, to inform me, Mr. Barry in particular wished me every success, and I might rest assured on my benefit night they would not oppose any strength that might tend to my prejudice--at the same time begged permission to hint (and leave the consideration to my better judgment) that it would be extremely irksome to Mr. Barry, who was hazarding a deep game, and had much at stake, to give the slightest opportunity for his enemies, the partizans of Mr. Sheridan's remaining party, to laugh at any little peculiarities of Mr. Barry's becoming an object for public ridicule by my talent of mimicry on the stage. Mr. Barry desired him to say, his theatre should always be open to receive me on any future occasion ; and it might happen at some other time to suit both our interests for our mutual advantage ; " and," added my visitor, " I sincerely wish Mr. Wilkinson, you will take my advice, for the friends of Messrs. Barry and Woodward are of the first consequence, and the leading people in the kingdom : they have now paid a high compliment to your abilities ; and though, Mr. Wilkinson, I have undertaken this embassy. I assure you it is not entirely on their accounts, but chiefly on your own. I wish well to both parties ; my friends well of Crow-street, and I wish you well

well as a young man early in life, under the patronage of my old acquaintance Mr. Chaigneau. Great disturbances often happen from trivial causes, and if your imitation of those gentlemen of Crow-street should occasion the exertion of their strength, and should they oppose you, where you now have one friend you will then have a thousand enemies, and it may fall heavy on you; whereas, if you act as by my advice, you will increase your connexions." Their sentiments coincided so nearly with my own, they were not harsh or unpalatable to me.

Mr. Chaigneau was a subscriber to Crow-street theatre, and had expressed himself uneasy on the subject: I rather suspect he was the instigator of this visit. I promised Mr. Coates to acquiesce; gave my compliments to Mr. Barry, and that he might depend on his request being complied with. The day after my appearance, Mr. Barry sent me a short letter of congratulation on the good reception he had heard I was favoured with the night before, and desired, when my benefit was, that I would instantly inform him, and inclose ten box tickets. Also the high breathing Mr. Mossop called, wondering, as we had both been at Drury-Lane the winter before, that I had not, soon after my arrival, been to see him and left a card of direction to Henry-court, Dame-street. He affected great ease and gaiety, neither of which sat easy; though a proud well-behaved man, he hoped we should be on friendly terms while I continued in Ireland. He did not express one syllable relative either to mimicry or
what

what I had done, or intended to do, at Smock-alley theatre. On his departure he rung the bell for a pen and ink, and begged permission to leave a note of remembrance for six box tickets on my benefit night. I occasionally waited on Mr. Mossop in Henry-court, so we both kept up the appearance of civility; but I was not such a novice not to well know (like Polly in the Beggar's Opera) that all this wheedling was not for nothing; and had he asked me to have drank, like Miss Peachum, I should not have poured any of his strong waters down my throat.

When the benefit came I sent the tickets—Mr. Mossop called in a few days and presented me with three guineas for his debt of honour:—Mr. Barry I called on, and sent to, but never got admittance. When my departure grew near, I really was urgent, and desired Mr. Mossop to mention it to him—he did one night, while he was acting Lear; he sent a message after the play to see me the next noon; (I had touched his pride; if I had not, do not think I should have touched the cash). I did not omit being punctual;—he met me with all those winning smiles and graces, for which he had few competitors on or off the stage. After many excuses, and rejoicing at my success, he presented me with five guineas, and apologized for begging my acceptance of such a *bagatelle*.—I assured him I was fully satisfied; he asked me to dinner with all the appearance of sincerity, but I think I can pronounce he was better pleased, and more sincere, when it came to the short phrase
of,

of, *I wish you a good day, Mr. Wilkinson.* As he had made the parade, I certainly was right to expect to be paid for my ten box tickets.

Barry, without doubt, possessed the art of pleasing persuasion beyond any man I ever saw: So thought the late Mr. Pelham. He was bewitching to hear, and dangerous to believe.

Previous to this account I should have mentioned, the second night of my performance was on Monday, January 7, *The Merchant of Venice*; Shylock, Mr. Brown; Portia, Mrs. Abington; and *Diversions of the Morning*. I believe there might be 40l. in the house. I took great pains—Mr. Foote was my chief food, and I was really and truly greatly approved.

The Duke and Duchess of Bedford honoured Smock-alley with a command on Monday, January 16.

My not interfering with the peculiarities of the gentlemen of Crow-street theatre (of which every one, more or less, had his share) certainly made me friends, and also rendered my time more easy and quiet. I was in a constant round of invitations and good Irish feasting.—While memory holds its seat in my distracted globe, Dublin will never be erased thence, nor must I, in gratitude and duty to my friends there, and respect and pleasure to myself, ever forget, that my first guinea I dared fairly call my own was in Dublin. So that my fair and lucky days I attribute to the genial soil of Old Ireland; my unlucky ones, but too often, I set down to my own account, with that mixture of vexation which lifts the ingredients of the poisoned chalice
to

to my own lips. Indeed those who are blessed with hereditary, or chance affluence, or sufficient independence, where the post of honour is the private station, are the truly blessed; yet they are not exempt from ills, but certainly bid the fairest to possess content and happiness. I should like to try the experiment of independence; and who would not?

I acted, besides the Diversions of the Morning, that season, 1760, *King Lear*; *Zamti*, in the *Orphan of China*, repeatedly; *Mrs. Amlet*, &c. *Corinna*, *Mrs. Abington*; *Brass*, *Mr. Brown*; also myself *Lord Chalkstone* and the *Old Man*; *Mrs. Abington*, the *Frenchman*, with great applause; *I Cadwallader*, and that lady, *Becky*.

Mr. Foote's benefit at *Crow-street*, was on Tuesday, February 11th. I fixed mine at *Smock-alley* for Friday, February 15th.—*Mr. Foote's* play was *Love makes a Man*.—*Clody*, *Mr. Woodward*; *Don Cholerick*, (first time) *Mr. Foote*; with his *Tragedy A-la-Mode*:—His boxes, though fashionable, were not extremely well supported. The house, on the whole, did not amount to above one hundred pounds.

The weather on my benefit night was dreadful indeed, every combination of deep snow, storm, &c. Notwithstanding the theatre overflowed from every part, and almost as soon as the doors were opened even the orchestra was filled with gentlemen who got over; the greatest part of the pit was laid into the boxes.—At *Crow-street* they acted *Measure for Measure*.—*Duke*, *Mr. Mollon*; *Lucio*, *Mr. Woodward*; *Isabella*,
Mrs.

Mrs. Fitzhenry, with Fortunatus, above 120l.—
A Miss M'Neale had a good Concert, and there were debates that night in the House of Commons. The receipt of my house was 172l. the greatest ever known at that time in that theatre. I mention this dreadful night as to weather, though a good blowing wind to me, not by any means to denote my consequence, but to have the reader note, what Dublin on a night of tempest and streets covered with snow could do, even at that time, when inclination prompted; as not my house only, but each place I have mentioned was well attended, though Dublin was not by a full third, I have reason to believe, what it is now, and a city growing not only more populous, but what is as good increasing in trade, opulence, and splendour. The eagerness for admittance was so extraordinary, that another night was desired for my advantage, and Mr. Brown, the manager, complied on condition of sharing after 30l. which I agreed to. I had 60l. on Thursday, Feb. 21, in what is there termed outstanding tickets. My benefit this year in point of profit, besides the receipt being better, was far superior to my first benefit there in 1758. A very particular circumstance occasioned this, which honour and justice calls on me to explain.

The farce (as by bill) was *High Life below Stairs*. Before my benefit happened Mr. Foote (who of all men in the world ought not to have been offended) found himself much hurt and wounded, and so little master of himself, that notwithstanding the unbounded liberties he had

had taken not only with the players, but also often to the disturbance of the peace of private families, as Mr. Langford, Mr. Aprice, Duchess of Kingston, and various other persons might rise up at three different stage trap doors, like Richard's Ghosts, to declare and swear. He actually visited me in great wrath, attended by Mr. Larry Kennedy, and in Pistol like manner protested, "If I dared take any more liberties on the stage in future with him, he was determined the next day to call me to account." But I pursued my plan, and was obliged, amongst other favours to Mr. Foote, that he was not observant, but let me rest in quiet. We often met drawn up at noon in different parties in the Trinity College Gardens as perfect strangers, but never at any house of visiting; if we had, his talent of wit would have forced me to have felt the severity of his lash. 'This surely is a striking instance how little we allow for the feelings of others, and how soon in general we are touched, galled, mortified, and enraged ourselves; that Mr. Foote should have felt himself hurt by my sallies of mimicry is not only strange, but that he should be so weak as to confess it, still more extraordinary, and made his visit to me a standing joke against him in the green-room. Every comprehension should retain,

Shame to him, whose cruel striking
Kills for faults of his own liking!
Twice treble shame on Angelo,
To weed my vice, and let his grow.

Indeed

Indeed the only instance of true good humour and pleasantry, on such an occasion, was afforded to me by my old acquaintance, the late Mr. Holland, when he returned from his Liverpool summer excursion to London, early in September 1764, preparatory to the opening of Drury-Lane theatre, which was bordering on the close of the theatrical Hay-Market campaign: He was in the boxes at the representation of the Tragedy A-la-Mode, where he was a visible witness to my similitude of his voice, manner, and mode of expression; he also perceived and felt the uncommon applause that honoured my performance; he was himself at the instant convinced of the likeness. After the performance he supped at Mr. Foote's, and the never forgotten *Chace Price*, jokingly and provokingly asked Holland, How he admired himself in the Muse's looking glass that Mr. Wilkinson had that night shewn him? Holland with a laugh, attended with the greatest apparent good humour and non-chalance, declared, "That he was so well pleased with the specimen of himself, that if his friend Wilkinson could support a difficult character throughout equal to his performance that evening, he should pronounce him a most excellent actor." Chace Price, Foote, and every one of the social board united in paying compliments to Holland's proper and well timed opinion of the Tea he had sipped just before at the theatre, and unexpectedly pronounced it not unpleasant, but even palatable. Except that visit from Mr. Foote, with Mr. Kennedy in Dublin, we had never spoke from his refusal to play

play for me at Drury-Lane, in the spring 1759, which cruel refusal as I then judged it, turned out a most fortunate though unforeseen occurrence to me.

The managers of Crow-street had to boast of the excellent performance of their plays; the novelty of Woodward's pantomimes, got up at a great expence, Foote's pieces, and the amazing attraction of Mr. Macklin, and his attention to Love-a-la-Mode that season, being its first representation in Ireland:—It was thus acted—Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan, Mr. Barry; Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, Mr. Macklin; Sir Theodore, Mr. Walker; Beau Mordecai, Mr. Messink, (excellent in a superior degree) Squire Groom, Mr. Woodward.—With this army in dread array, they neglected what I luckily thought of, the then new entertaining little farce of High Life below Stairs, brought out at Drury-Lane, so early as the month of October that season. It was often acted before Mrs. Abington's departure and mine for Ireland, so we were both perfect in all the minutiae of the farce, or what we term the *stage business*; very material points in getting up a piece with correctness. Each character was within the compass of our little troop—one and all with very little attention and care to appear to advantage; besides having the great addition of originality, it was well drawn for the compass of middling abilities to comprehend and execute: so that, take it for all in all, High Life below Stairs was a strong chance of good novelty, and was attended with very little extraordinary expence, which

which was another convenience to our manager, as he was to pay for what I revived or produced for my nights' entertainments.—No comparison could be drawn to our disadvantage—another favourable point.—Mrs. Abington approved of my thought for that farce, and she not only consented, but seemed pleased with Mrs. Kitty; and though she had played several leading characters, yet our receipts only ran from 20l. to 25l. and at best 40l. in general, one night with the other. She laboured under great disadvantages, and such as much repelled her endeavours to get admittance in the Court of Fame; for though she was much approved, yet as she had not then a London stamp, and as Mrs. Dancer was firmly established in Dublin, her merit was much forgot when her guests were departed.

My night being so well and fashionably attended, not only by a crowded, but a most brilliant pit and boxes, and the heavy play of Douglas but indifferently acted, and must have appeared to great disadvantage when comparisons were drawn by an impartial review of the different theatres.—However, it was set out, not only with composure, but, really, applause:—we were perfect, which will ever help indifferent acting, and my age was very proper for the part of Douglas; they were pleased to applaud me in it, and that dismal story gave double force and a relish to our farce. My Tea had long been sanctioned, and I had credit for all my imitations, had they not been so good as they were; but they had not any opinion of our farce, though manufactured in London, as Mr. Garrick

Garrick seldom at first put his name to any piece till its success was signed; therefore, not having a good author's name, they concluded, had it merited any notice it would not have escaped the scrutinizing eye of Mr. Woodward; they did not consider, or sufficiently know, that with Barry's and Mossop's tragedies, Woodward's comedies and pantomimes, and Macklin's *Love A-la-Mode*, they had worked all their buffs, and Macklin had drilled even the managers well at Rehearsals, which altogether, with Foote's pieces, &c. cut out such work for the season, as racked their inventions to get finished and produced; so my audience only expected a poor farce, and as poorly acted, which would be treated with the laugh of the pit, and sneering contempt would finish the evening's entertainment.—But half the first act had not passed before looks of universal surprise and satisfaction overspread every countenance with unceasing satisfaction.—Mr. Ryder's Sir Harry was charming—Mr. Gates was a very conceited actor; all his faults and oddities served but to heighten the extravagance of my Lord Duke—Mr. Heaton's Philip as well as such a part could be done, and he was a very good actor in all the dry clowns, clodpoles, &c.—Miss Phillips (aunt to the present Mrs. Jordan) our heroine, who was also of a conceited turn, though sensible and well educated, made the part of Lady Bab better than any other actress I ever saw attempt it.—Myself, from observation and youth, must have been stupid indeed not to have been a very good Jemmy, the *country boy*; and as the great personage

personage always appears last in triumphal entries and processions—so in Kitty, Mrs. Abington advanced; the whole circle were in surprise and rapture, each asking the other how such a treasure could have possibly been in Dublin, and in almost a state of obscurity; such a jewel was invaluable, and their own tastes and judgments they feared would justly be called in question, if this daughter of Thalia was not immediately taken by the hand and distinguished as her certain and striking merit demanded.

The same farce was repeated the week following, with the Orphan of China, Feb. 21; Zamti, Mr. Wilkinson, which I had before acted, and had been well received in the character.—The Crow-street managers advertised against it, that they had dresses preparing in London which were to be sent over, and intimating Mr. Murphy, the author, would follow to see it rehearsed; to which Mr. Brown replied in the following paragraph:

“The Orphan of China, being a tragedy not any way difficult or mysterious to those who do not require to be parroted in their parts, we can assure the public that it is now in perfect readiness, and will be performed this evening at the theatre in Smock-alley, without the assistance of the author: For as plays are sometimes revived long after the writer's decease, what would become of them in a theatre where it is found essentially necessary for the poet to attend the latter rehearsals? And, as to the dresses, neither the Chinese or Tartar are absolutely unknown in Ireland; therefore, it is hoped,

hoped, it will not be objected as a fault, that we have not gone to London either for design or materials."

Mandane was acted by Miss Ibbott—a lady of merit in speaking blank verse. There was 150l. in the house the second night of *High Life*, and it went off, if possible, with more eclat than on the first representation, and Abington resounded in all parts of the theatre. I remember the second night of *High Life*, Mrs. Abington said to me (with great propriety) "Good God, Mr. Wilkinson! what could provoke you to blunder so? why should you think of a tragedy when you had reason to expect so fine a house, as the company are not equal to the performance?" Certainly her being so noticed in *Kitty* would, in speculation, have been materially bettered with that lady in a leading character in comedy; the house would have felt much injured and diminished in profit had half price been taken, but it neither was then, nor ever since has been, the custom to take under full price in Dublin.—I had a strong party made again by my friends, which, with Mrs. Abington's name, settled the business to my advantage; but I told her my reason for taking a tragedy was solely that its gravity might aid and give spirit when the new farce came on: The truth was, I wanted to entertain myself with acting Mr. Garrick's part of the Chinese Zamti, in which I was so fortunate as actually to please beyond mediocrity, though dressed in an old red damask bed gown, which was what we termed the *stock bed gown* for Brabantio and many

many other parts, and had for time immemorial been of that venerable use, and bore the marks of many years faithful servitude.

I was certainly lucky in my two nights answering with such swimming success, and more fortunate still, when I inform the reader, twenty-four hours after would have given the last night a severe blow, and greatly prejudiced it; for the next day, not only an alarm was received, but several expresses arrived, that Thurot had actually landed at Carrickfergus. This of course caused the army to march by beat of drum instantly, to give immediate assistance and repel the invaders; and it naturally occasioned a general panic and confusion, and was the topic of universal conversation throughout the city of Dublin: Even the Abington that day was not mentioned.— It quickly subsided, and Mons. Thurot made an unfortunate retreat, as stands on well-known record.

High Life below Stairs was perpetually acted, and with never-failing success.—In ten days after its being performed, *Abington's cap* was so much the taste with the ladies of fashion and ton, that there was not a milliner's shop window, great or small, but was adorned with it, and in large letters ABINGTON appeared to attract the passers by. This Abington-rage Woodward endeavoured to suppress by ridicule, not here fit to be described, but all to little, or rather to no purpose, for her reputation as an actress daily increased, though on the remote ground of an unfashionable ill-supported theatre.

I have

I have neglected to mention the play of *Barbarossa* at Crow-street, on Monday, January 28:—Achmet, Mr. Mossop; *Barbarossa*, Mr. Sowden; and *Zaphira*, Mrs. Fitzhenry.—After which was performed, (in two acts) a new comedy called the *Minor*.—The principal characters by Mr. *Woodward*, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Sowden, Mr. Vernon, Mr. Walker, Miss *Whitt*, and Mr. Foote; which piece had, during Mr. Foote's whole residence, been constantly puffed in the papers, and great things were expected from it, as he himself had been acting and repeating all the best strokes at every table where-ever he was invited, or on whatever parties he was engaged. His connexions were fashionable and extensive, and the long conversation of the *Minor* promised great matters;—the house was full. It was then only produced as a little comedy of two acts—*Smirk*, the auctioneer, was not then inserted, though he had talked much about it, and told many stories of Mr. Langford, whom he aimed the character at.—Dr. Squintum's *Whitfieldian* epilogue was not wrote.—The other scenes were much the same as when produced at the Haymarket the summer following—nor was there the now printed introduction.—Shift, Mr. Foote did me the honour to write as a satire on me, which part he acted so as to convey to the audience that Wilkinson was the person whom he describes thus (speaking as Shift):

Shift. You must know then, that Fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who
from

from a tailor made a pope, from a gin-shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all, has thought fit to raise me to my present height, from the humble employment of "Light your honour," a link boy.

Sir William Wealthy. A pleasant fellow! — Who were your parents?

Shift. I was produced, Sir, by a left-handed marriage, in the language of the newspapers, between an illustrious lamplighter, and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher—"Cat's meat and dog's meat! Hearts, liver, lights, or a good sheep's heart!"—I dare say you have heard of my mother, Sir?—But as to this happy pair I owe little besides my being, I shall drop them where they dropt me—in the streets. My first knowledge of the world I owe to a school which has produced many a great man, the avenues of the playhouse. There, Sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learned dexterity from pickpockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashions from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters. "Here, sirrah! light me across the kennel."—"I hope your honour will remember poor Jack."—"You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence—I'll pay you the next time I see you."—But, lack-a-day, Sir, that next time I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.

Sir William. Very well.

Shift. To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.

Sir William. How did you gain admittance there?

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Shift.

Shift. My merit, Sir, that like my link, threw a radiance round me. I moved the compassion of one of the performers, a whimsical man, he took me into his service.—My master was remarkably happy in an art which however disesteemed at present, is by Tully reckoned among the perfections of an orator—mimicry.

Sir William. Why, you are deeply read, Mr. Shift?

Shift. A smattering.—But as I was saying, Sir, nothing came amiss to my master. Bipedes, or quadrupeds; rationals, or animals; from the clamour of the bar, to the cackle of the barn-door; all were objects of his imitations, and my attention. In a word, Sir, for two whole years, under this learned professor, I studied and starved, impoverished my body, and pampered my mind; till thinking myself pretty near equal to my master, *I made him one of his own bows, and set up for myself.*

All this part went off very well, as they soon felt the joke, laughed and applauded; nor did I dislike it myself, quite the contrary; for had I been really as described, it was not my fault, I could not have helped it. His *Transfer's* scene went off but very so, so; and Mrs. Cole, by Mr. Woodward, very bad indeed: for though great entertainment was expected from him, and he was dressed with the utmost pains and study, an article to which he paid much attention and consideration, yet his performance completely d——d the farce; he could not but with the utmost difficulty obtain permission to finish the part, it gave great disgust; he lolled out his tongue and played some tricks

tricks to help it, which only added to its damnation.—Mr. Woodward having Mrs. Cole only to act, made the dressing of that beldam much more complete than any other actor could do who had Shift and the other parts to equip and then dress again, and it had that advantage on his first entrance: but all favour soon vanished; for when Mrs. Cole complained of her rheumatism, his manner was thought indecent by the gentlemen, and all the ladies seemed offended with the character itself. Mr. Foote gave it out for some future evening with considerable alterations, but it was not attempted again, nor did he play, I believe, after his benefit, Feb. 11. He acted on shares, and was so surrounded with Mr. Macklin, and the other performers of strength, that the expedition was by no means profitable to him. The locality of the piece was one reason that caused its unhappy fate, and another was, it had not the London fashion. So the Minor was turned out destitute of friends and fortune.—That piece was then condemned in Dublin, though supported by great actors; but in a few months after, in London, raised its head, and did wonders.

From dear Dublin and good friends I took my farewell early in March, and left Mrs. Abington going on in full career to reach the pinnacle, where she has many years sat smiling, and been looked at and admired with sincere pleasure and respect by the first persons in both the kingdoms: At that juncture she had many disadvantages to struggle with, such as the encountering Barry's, Woodward's, Mossop's, Fitzhenry's, and Dancer's

cer's benefit nights at Crow-street, which summonses the Dublin world obeyed: and Smock-alley, which had sometimes by luck her attractions and chance benefits, &c. dragged on per force, but on the ides of March was on the verge of a certain downfall.—Plays were thus acted then in Crow-street: The Orphan.—Castalio, Mr. Barry; Chamont, Mr. Mossop; Polydore, Mr. Dexter; Monimia, Mrs. Dancer; and all the other characters well dressed and supported, as may be supposed, by referring to the list of the company, with the advantage of new scenery, a new and elegant theatre, &c.—

All for Love.—Marc Antony, Mr. Barry; Dolabella, Mr. Jefferson; Ventidius, Mr. Mossop; Octavia, Mrs. Dancer; Cleopatra, Mrs. Fitzhenry.—Alexander the Great cast in the same manner.—Comedies, with Woodward, Macklin, Mrs. Kennedy, Vernon, &c. with the persons just mentioned: So that, take it all together, it was equal to any company I ever saw in London, and much better than I have frequently seen there: Though the old house was sinking rapidly, had not Mrs. Abington by her strength of arm upheld it; yet it was indeed restored to its ancient dignity and family honours for one joyful happy night of ecstasy, and that was no less than on the enjoyment of The Abington, at what might truly be called *her own night*.

A strange play for Mrs. Abington to chuse it was! A New Way to pay Old Debts, March 17; but she made amends by other performances that evening. On which occasion the old, the young, the gay, all bowed at her shrine, as the temple of
Thalia,

Thalia, such ascendancy had she thus quickly acquired over the public opinion.---This attachment towards the latter end of the season did not cease with the million; for, it is true, to attend the falling theatre was grown a great *bore*; yet still languishing for Abington, and wishing to see her on a better cultivated and good promising soil for her merit to be nourished and matured by a perpetual sunshine, a party of leading persons proposed her acting a few nights at Crow-street before the theatrical campaign closed; gave assurance of patronage on her nights of performance, and on a clear night being promised and fixed for Mrs. Abington in return for her support to the manager's nights, she complied with their desire.

Mrs. Abington had not any occasion to request this change of place or accumulation of honours, as they were not owing to solicitation on her part, but the persons of distinction were stimulated to this desire by their eagerness to satisfy themselves by seeing the new favourite transplanted amidst the gaudy flowers of Crow-street, where they did not doubt but she would soon gain a state of distinction, whenever the artists of theatrical florists met to signalize, distinguish, and decide the claims to the prizes when they scrutinized on the play-house auriculas and the gaudy tulips.

All that was contracted for by the persons of quality for the managers and Mrs. Abington was, I believe, strictly abided by, faithfully executed, and answered to the infinite satisfaction of all parties. The persons of lead and fashion were entertained and paid for their purchase of choice,

not compulsion ; the managers got money---Mrs. Abington had a surprising and magnificent audience at her benefit---so I can guess they were all pleased :---Not that I would venture to pronounce all were entirely satisfied, for there never can be great promotion at the real court, or behind the theatrical curtain, but it must and will affect and hurt the minds of those concerned. A lord disappointed of his court expectation seldom (I will not say never) rejoices at the preference given to another : So the actor or actress, buoyed up with the pleasing tide of success, must be alarmed when he or she not only hears, but feels the treading of the kibe by a courtier or new-raised favourite.

It not only is galling, but more is really to be said for it than is always allowed : that merit should be cherished and raise its head, is a first principle and duty from the audience and the manager ; but when considered as a lessening of pride and income to another, it is a serious matter to the soul so piqued, nor are any minds so soon hurt on the least frivolous occasions as those of the theatre ; and sometimes it happens a phenomenon really starts up.—Mrs. Jordan, four years ago only, playing at York at 11. 11s. 6d. per week, was thought really very clever by London performers who saw her there, but all said it would not do among them ; yet by great luck, great good fortune indeed, and to be for an hundred years at least remembered in theatrical annals, she in two years afterwards made even the London managers dread her frown, her non-compliance, her elopement, her tooth-ach, or her any phantom

phantom of horror which she has threatened them with, to the terror of Tragedy itself, and made them comply with the most exorbitant terms.—A happy lot indeed! A happy rise!—I hope it will last her life, and with care make her career successful, as it has so providentially and wonderfully begun.

Mrs. Jordan is certainly the lucky child of Fortune, lulled, caressed, and nursed in the lap of Nature: she is undoubtedly the reigning Thalia of the age 1790, and deservedly so; and to her comic talents, archness, whim, and fancy, I submissively bow, and also acknowledge her humanity and goodness to her late parent:—But am compelled, as Mr. Manager, to declare, like Mr. Foote in his *Devil upon Two Sticks*, (as greatness knows itself) that Mrs. Jordan, at making a bargain, is too many for the cunningest devil of us all.

Speaking of Mrs. Abington's merit, in the comic line, occasioned my introducing Mrs. Jordan's name at the same time; and as I cannot yet quit Mrs. Abington's situation, whom I left at her great benefit in Dublin, it may be easily supposed, from her being so happily transplanted, that she derived many advantages from playing with Mr. Woodward, Mr. Macklin, and other regulars; nor was Mr. Woodward a loser, but a gainer by the acquisition to his stage; as Mrs. Abington rebounded the ball equal to the force with which Woodward struck it.—But now another irksome matter arose in consequence of her success; where our passions or partialities are predominant, it is not always reason can be listened to or obeyed.

ed. It was very apparent, from motives of policy and sound judgment that Mrs. Abington should be engaged on the most eligible terms, otherwise they could not hope such a rising actress would article. To this Woodward did not hesitate, as it assisted his comedies, and an agreement was settled for the following winter. But when it is considered Mrs. Dancer then played all the principal characters in comedy as well as in tragedy, it made the sea of Crow-street troubled; the waves that looked calm turned to rough breakers, and the open sea to rise and threaten a storm: for when those ladies acted in the same plays, as in the *Lady's Last Stake*, Mrs. Dancer played Mrs. Conquest, Mrs. Abington Miss Notable; (by the bye, Mrs. Jordan, why have you neglected Miss Notable!)—In *Love for Love*, Angelica, Mrs. Dancer; Miss Prue, Mrs. Abington; and many other plays where they were often mutually concerned, and sometimes where Mrs. Abington was the rival *Fine Lady*, which some plays admit, where the parts are of equal consequence. Miss Notable and Miss Prue, from the archness and excellent acting of Mrs. Abington, seemed to have the decision at the winning post for fame; but I must observe, those comic characters will ever, when well supported, obtain the loud applause, however well acted Mrs. Conquest and Angelica may be by any actresses whatever, as the hoydens are so well calculated for what we term *stage effect*.

This division of hands from the upper and lower part of the house, it was not likely Mrs. Dancer (as queen of the theatre) could
relish

relish or gulp down by any means to make the Abington pleasing or agreeable. This proved, and grew offensive to Mr. Barry, as he was then as passionate an innamorato as ever youthful poet fancied when he loved, and would have thrown immediate bars to the engagement with Mrs. Abington, and greatly impeded her rapid good fortune, had not a sudden and important matter of astonishment at that time started up to the amazement of every faculty of eyes, ears, &c. for Barry and Woodward, lulled in their long wished for security, became the dupes of their own arts, and made the wandering prodigal (Woodward) begin seriously to reflect, and severely repent his foolish conduct in leaving his enviable situation in London, and above all the horror of losing what he had saved with so much care. This dreadful alarm was no less than the certainty of a report being confirmed as real, which at first they treated as unlikely, vague, and impossible; but it proved strictly true, that Mr. Mossop from the encouragement and instigation of all his friends, and patronized by the Countess of Brandon, of powerful sway, with many leaders of fashion, had certainly taken Smock-alley theatre on a long lease, purposing many expensive and gaudy alterations, &c. to oppose Crow-street, in the month of October the ensuing season. Barry and Woodward (to prevent if possible this dreadful undertaking) made him liberal offers; nay, even humbled themselves before him, to intreat Mossop to name his own terms. All this only increased his pride, and he spurned at every kindness or emolument, submitted to his acceptance

and consideration: they even offered him one thousand pounds English, and two benefits whenever he chose to take them; but all would not do, though they certainly would have been losers by his acceptance: but their situation was desperate; therefore all they could do was right, if by any means they could have effectually prevented such an opposition: Mossop's pride and obstinacy was however bent on monarchy, and so he was the cause of mutual ruin; but he at last suffered in a peculiar degree of punishment.

He had saved a decent fortune, and by the absence of Barry, could have commanded a first station in London at either theatre, whenever he pleased, or wished a change from Dublin; but his pride was predominant over reason, so he prostrated fame, fortune, health, and peace of mind, headlong at the shrine of vanity, where sycophants hailed him with songs of triumph in full chorus, but his festal days were few, and not to be envied.

To look over this, it seems as if I meant to write a history of the Irish stage, for which I am by no means competent: My only reason for inserting all these fluctuating chances here, is to make it plain in the course of my narrative, what was the ground-work for my changes of situation in the several places, on my repeated visits to Dublin in particular. And to any lady or gentleman unacquainted with stage affairs, they will be better able to judge, by being thus brought into a little acquaintance with matters of fact.

Barry

Barry and Woodward on this act of hostility being put into actual force, were from necessity glad to secure Mrs. Abington; and I do suppose, however she might fear foul play from Mr. Barry and Mrs. Dancer, thought Woodward to act with was a great point, much better than being at Mossop's new theatre, without such a partner to support her; Mossop being out of her walk, and Woodward the Comedian: she therefore depended on his interest and candour for her consequence in the comic line. Mrs. Fitzhenry was also secured, and by so doing they looked upon Mr. Mossop not so formidable, as they knew the situation of London had no tragedy woman to spare; and Mossop's whole forte was there only. Mossop had thought himself certain of Mrs. Fitzhenry, as she had not expressed herself happy or contented with Mrs. Dancer's power; which sometimes occasioned little heart burnings and discontents: whereas with Mossop she might have been sole empress—However Barry seeing the danger, turned very complying; and enlarging her terms, with other douceurs, she thought it wiser to stay with Barry and observe Mossop's success for a year, and then judge how far it would be prudent to trust her feet on the slippery ways of Smock-alley. Mossop sniffed the air, and breathed hard at Mrs. Fitzhenry's preferring Barry; but hearing how perplexed Mrs. Bellamy's finances were, and in such a deranged state that she could not with safety make her public appearance in London, thought if he could seduce her over to Dublin for the winter, his fortune would be made in a hurry, though at any price. He therefore artied to give her

her no less than one thousand pounds and two benefits, with a *charte blanche*, to act only what she pleased to fix on.

Mrs. Bellamy had performed Juliet with Mr. Garrick in London, on its first great run, and supported a principal line of characters in both the London theatres. Her benefits were brilliant; so she had fashion and name, with the London currency, to insure her reception, and had been in Dublin when Mr. Sheridan was manager, where Mr. Garrick acted at the same time, and was esteemed their first actress, was looked at as a charming, elegant young woman, and was the universal toast in Ireland, 1747. Her character was also at that juncture respectable, and she was received as a fashionable gentlewoman in several of the first families there. All these points considered, certainly afforded Mossop sufficient grounds to entertain great promise of success; yet this noble fancied structure in one night fell to the ground and lay as neglected rubbish, unless occasionally making use of her best materials; but as to being a substantial support to the theatre, it was merely visionary, and not to be relied on for real services.

Mossop as a manager made his first appearance in *Pierre in Venice Preserved*, in November 1766; *Belvidera*, Mrs. Bellamy, being the first night of her performing. Expectation was so great, that the house filled as fast as the people could thrust in, with or without paying. On speaking her first line behind the scenes—

“Lead

"Lead me ye virgins; lead me to that kind voice."

It struck the ears of the audience as uncouth and unmusical; yet she was received, as was prepared and determined by all who were her or Mr. Mossop's friends, and the public at large, with repeated plaudits on her *entrée*. But the roses were fled! the young, the once lovely Bellamy was turned haggard! and her eyes that used to charm all hearts, appeared sunk, large, hollow, and ghastly.—O time! time! thy glass should be often consulted! for before the short first scene had elapsed, disappointment, chagrin, and pity, sat on every eye and countenance.

Mrs. Bellamy had left Dublin when in her zenith, in May 1748, and did not revisit it till that November 1760. Mossop's friends were void of humanity when they thought of his danger; and she that was to do all, instead of that, they judged, would do more injury than service: yet she was unavoidably in justice by article, to be paid one thousand pounds, and to have two benefits. By the end of the third act, they were all (like Bobadil) planet struck; the other two acts hobbled through. Mossop was cut to the heart, and never played Pierre (one of his best parts) so indifferently as on that night. The curtain dropped, and poor Bellamy never after drew a single house there. And by her mode of boundless extravagant living she got so deep in debt, that she was often arrested when she was to play, and the audience sometimes obliged to be dismissed. Indeed in her memoirs she mentions her being

ing arrested there herself: which, added to her living publicly with Mr. Digges, though at the same time foolishly wishing it to be understood, that she was wife to Mr. Calcraft, altogether sunk her into universal contempt and insignificance. She left Dublin without a single friend to regret her loss. What a change from the days of her youth! and, as an actress of note, her name never more ranked in any theatre, nor did she ever again rise in public estimation.

Cardinal Wolsey's remarks may be applied equally as an observation to either sex, where he speaks thus:—

Such is the state of man. To-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him:
The third day, comes a frost, a killing frost,
And,—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening,—nips his root;
And then he falls, as I do.

They might serve also for Mossop, who often acted that part, and actually died almost perishing for want at Chelsea, without common necessaries, food, or clothing, and was carried to his place of rest, without leaving the means of payment for his burial rites.

Alas! poor Mossop and Bellamy! may you rest in peace, and prove an awful, useful lesson, which shews that their own errors, and not the rod of God brought on their miseries and dreadful end. Mossop on his death-bed might truly speak as the Cardinal, and surely Wolsey could not have been prouder,

prouder, and that pride he never lost but with his last breath——

——I have ventured,

Like little wanton boys, that swim on bladders,

These many summers in a sea of glory;

But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride

At length broke under me; and now has left me,

Weary, and old with service, to the mercy

Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.

Thus poor Bellamy, who once lolled in her chair, and rolled in her chariot and all the vanities of the world, ended her days in a prison.

Mr. Mossop and Mrs. Bellamy once followed and admired, fell equal victims to the griping hand of penury, without one friendly hand to close their eye lids. Indeed a clergyman of Chelsea, at his own expence paid for his *poor* coffin, and kindly performed his funeral rites.—This conveys a lesson to myself and every one: That friend in need (MONEY) is the truest, and prevents a desertion of those we term such: for while there is any thing in hand to give, there will always be some kind attendant ready to take; But distress, like *lending* money, is too often the loss of friends, and the triumph and contempt of enemies, who had envied the prosperity, even though that prosperity had bestowed favours on their own wants. There I am grieved to observe (to the disgrace of human feelings) such hardened minds as will exultingly triumph over the miseries of those from whom they have been even cherished and supported; and may well make the unfortunate bitterly reflect, like Jane Shore, that——

Those

Those who blessed, ~~now~~ curse me to my face.

Also like what Lear expresses——

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
For lifting food to it?

And surely to aggravate the distressed and destitute, is little better than a knave or villain's office.

Certainly had I been provident of what I had accumulated, it would have proved by this time like a tontine, a decent independent income; yet I have not been singular, as the wise, and truly cautious, careful Woodward, was guilty of the same imprudence, and spoke his public recantation as the prodigal returned.

The late anecdotes relative to the once glittering and splendid appearance of the great and proud Mossop, and the unthinking, pompous, vain, and foolish Bellamy,* have occasioned in my reverie the recollection of a fatal fair one, who in her time of luxury and affluence must be to this day still well remembered by many. I mean the greatly admired, followed, and once celebrated Lucy Cooper; and few (if any) are exempt from woe. Her faults and frailties were so numberless, that the strictly rigorous, armed with virtuous austerity, would perhaps wish such a wretch (as they will disdainfully term that poor unfortunate) to be wiped from the annals of remembrance, and not allow any trait to be retained; but let such very good persons bless God for their uncommon lot of
superabundant

superabundant goodness, relax a little from their severity, return thanks for their *heaven-like* superiority, and permit a drop of pity to fall as a tribute to that late forlorn, well known character.

Lucy Cooper, from the year 1756 till 1767, was as great a toast as can be remembered in the court of Comus, and she herself was the first Bacchant of the age. Her company, when in the gay circle she presided at the social board, absolutely gave inspiration to each flowing soul; as in point of good sense, combined with wit and humour, if she did not surpass, she was certainly equal as a *bon vivant* to any person of either sex that I ever remember. Her faults, it is true, were numberless, and I fear weigh heavy in the scale; but truth can more than a little balance, and counterpoise the other side with generosity, friendship, feeling, attended by boundless charity and humanity. Surely such qualities will more than a little preponderate with the truly religious good mind and considerate disposition? I have often regretted for her miseries; for when subsistence had fled, and her charms for mankind had satiated, her good became neglected and forgotten, as it had never been. I was grieved when she was relieved by death, that she was not permitted to linger a little longer here on earth, in her abode of sorrow, penance, penitence, and affliction, merely to have gratified my own self-love, and to have proved my true regard and esteem for her real worth. Lucy Cooper was in the early part of her life, elegantly provided for by the late

late Sir Orlando Bridgeman, whose settlement she in a pet threw into the fire. Indeed had that not been the case, there is too much reason to suggest, it would soon have had some fatal and unthinking finish, as prudence was not in Lucy's catalogue of perfections, and never visited her bedside until it was too late to help her on this side the grave. Little histories are introduced even in works of sterling merit, I therefore here need not apologise for this short introduction relative to the elegant, though not the beautiful Lucy Cooper.

As the pen of nature will speak for itself far more forcibly and superior to that of art, I will request permission to insert one or two letters from that frail object—they cannot offend the chastest peruser; but will be a lesson to those at present probably deviating from rectitude, and plunging in riot, debauchery, and extravagance; and also afford satisfaction to those who are still surviving, and remember that the said Lucy Cooper, was once the lively, the spirited, and in many respects, the amiable and inestimable.

LETTER I.

To TATE WILKINSON, *Esq.*

“ THIS morning at ten I had the pleasure
 “ of your letter, and am happy to find my
 “ dear friend Tate has still a thought to bestow
 “ on such an unfortunate being as Lucy Cooper;
 “ not one except yourself of all my acquaintance
 “ has

" has sent near me since I have been here, which
 " is upwards of five months. Now I know you
 " are in town, I shall think every day an age
 " until I see you; therefore, if you do not
 " come soon, I shall think you only meant your
 " letter to mortify me. As bad as this place is
 " I can get you something that you will like
 " for dinner, therefore hope when you do come,
 " you will oblige me with as much of your
 " company as is convenient to yourself. I
 " cannot entertain you with India bonds as I
 " once did; and to hear my distresses, I flatter
 " myself will be disagreeable to my good friend
 " Tate; so for that day, I will set aside all re-
 " flection, and only think how I can make
 " such a place as this agreeable to one who I
 " shall ever retain the greatest sense of gratitude
 " and sincere friendship for.

" Dear Snub, yours,

" LUCY COOPER."

P. S. " Do not make any ceremony—you will
 " be sure to find me at home."

King's Bench, Jan. 5, 1769.

From her misery in the King's Bench prison;
 after surmounting innumerable difficulties, not
 to be described, and those difficulties accom-
 panied with variety of wretchedness, by the
 assistance of a very few remaining friends, she
 was released; but they soon in general deserted
 her, and many not without upbraidings.—O
 summer friendship! whose flattering leaves that
 shadowed

shadowed us in our prosperity, with the least gust drop off in the autumn of, adversity.

The following year, 1770, this afflicted unfortunate one was immersed (if possible) in a more deplorable situation, surrounded by illness, woe, and calamity, as the following will fully ascertain, and I prophesy will give a twinge to the soul of sensibility.

LETTER II.

To TATE WILKINSON, *Esq.*

“ SOME few days ago, I heard my dear
 “ friend was in town, and have much wondered
 “ at my not seeing you—sure I have not lost
 “ your friendship, which always made me happy!
 “ I know your goodness of heart too well to
 “ suppose it is because I am distressed:—Oh,
 “ dear Tate! God only knows what I have
 “ suffered for this last month past, confined to
 “ my bed without any one to assist me; every
 “ thing, even to my bed gown, gone to support
 “ life, *which I am afraid is of short duration.*
 “ In short, my mind is as much disordered as
 “ my body; for it is—hard when I think how
 “ much I have had it in my power, to be so
 “ reduced as I am: I hope I shall see you before
 “ you leave town—I am sure the sight of you
 “ will enliven me; for as bad as I am at this
 “ time, I think I can find strength to laugh a
 “ little bit with you.—

“ I am, your much obliged,

Bow-street,

“ humble servant,

Jan. 20, 1770.

“ L. COOPER.”

I trust

I trust the wise Disposer of our brittle clay tenements permitted, in her last moments, a forgiving angel to speak peace to her sad heart; and that she, by the remission of sin, has partook of that bliss, graciously promised to the sinner that gives joy in heaven over ninety and nine by true repentance.—Calista's lines may here, without impropriety, be quoted as her epitaph, had she a tomb-stone—

That fatal form, which drew on thy undoing,
Fasting, and tears, and hardships did destroy,
Nor light, nor food, nor comfort did you know,
Nor ought that could continue hated life:
Thus when we view thee meagre, wan, and chang'd,
Stretch'd at thy length, and dying in thy cave,
Let each good mind relent, and sighing say,
At length thy tears have washed thy stains away,
At length 'twas time thy punishment should cease,
Rest then poor suffering wretch, and be at peace.

As one grave story and reflection leads the mind to another, and as moralizing is not to me very habitual, I will hasten from the subject, mount my hobby, and once again chat on stage matters.

I perceive, that being under the necessity of mentioning many excellent performers, it is very tiresome, in so many pages, to read the words much applause; great applause, much approbation, acclamations, shouts, with a long list of *etceteras*. I have therefore dropped my pen, and looked into many good authors and morning papers for more various means of expression, so as to make it more palatable, if possible, to the reader; but I find in all theatrical books

books and papers those constant repetitions, with this difference, many of those stage critiques have judgment and genius, of which I lament my being so destitute; so, kind reader, take the will for the deed: And though I have made the remark, I find my fingers tingle to be again at some *monstrous* applause, astonishing, charming, delightful or amazing performer. I will begin again with the great man, *Wilkinson*, as the hero of the book, and remark, though I troubled the reader with my Dublin account till some time in Mr. Mossop's first winter season as manager in 1760, yet I must recur to myself when I was stepping into the packet for Holyhead early in March 1760, previous to the occurrences mentioned, most part happening after 1760, and left the following note a few days before for *Williamson's Universal Advertiser*, and Mr. George Faulkner's *Dublin Journal*.

“Mr. *Wilkinson's* speedy call to London prevents his waiting on the nobility and gentry to return them his acknowledgments for the signal marks of favour and approbation with which they have honoured his attempts to please. He can but in this manner beg they will accept of them, hoping, that with more experience he may hereafter be able to entertain them in a manner more equal to the elegance of their taste.”

I got to London with my pockets well lined; my worthy mother was as rejoiced to see me as if I had returned from the perils of an East India voyage. I soon went to court, (Mr.

Garrick's

Garrick's court) paid my homage to my patron, and returned him his twenty guineas, which I soon repented of, and do honestly declare it is the only act like a fraud I ever could have pardoned in myself; but I wish I had not paid him so hastily, as I afterwards had a full right to have retained it as my own:—he seemed really glad to see me, and wished me joy a thousand times.

On the Saturday of the second week, after I had announced my return from my granted furlough, I of course was ready to mount guard, had my general ordered me to do so. I had his own prepared article in force, and was not a deserter, but honourably returned before my full leave of absence had expired. On my bow to the treasurer, demanding my enormous salary, and asking for only one week as due after being two in town, to my astonishment he refused my pittance: I urged my article, saw Mr. Garrick, and spoke to him on the business:—He said, he had more than paid my salary in permitting me to visit Ireland, and again refused payment as in 1758. I found altercation would not answer any purpose, and that it was in vain to persist, though in fact it was, in plain English, a cheating, low, mean trick, unworthy not only Mr. Garrick in his elevated situation, but must be judged ungenerous, mean, and dishonest between man and man, unblest with his abilities, genius and fortune. But where avarice is the ground-work of the mind it will stoop beneath itself to gratify self-love.——

But

But little rogues must suffer fate,
That great ones may enjoy their state.

For this fixed refusal of Mr. Garrick's there could be no remedy, as law would be a hazardous experiment for a young actor; which, if I had hastily attempted, he would have prevented my immediate compliance with the article, but then, when enraged, he would have obliged me to appear in a menial station, or forfeited all the salary; so that I must have lost my periodical payment still, or have paid severely indeed for it, by working as his negroe slave till the end of May, and that he well knew. Good God! was it worth his while to expose such narrow principles, and sacrifice all his avowed regard, for such a paltry sum!—As to my assertions, I suppose his books are in preservation, and curiosity might be satisfied.

After being deprived of my salary I met Mr. Garrick in Covent-Garden, not having admittance in his house, he being always denied; and at the theatre he hardly knew me, I had behaved so ill by asking for my salary to ruin him, *poor man!* When I told him that I had spoke to the prompter to know when my benefit-night was to be fixed, but had received no answer, he stood gazing, and like Lady Pentweazle, called up a look, not with one eye only, but with two piercers, meaning to intimidate me by his dignity, which might have had the desired effect two years before that encounter, but not then. At last he said,

he

he was astonished at the unexpected absurdity as well as the unreasonableness of the request, and that the business of the theatre was so arranged it could not be; but, to cut short all intercourse on the subject, he concluded with saying, he would not comply with it: and here I must observe was injustice, merely for fear I should add to the little stock I had secured much against his wishes, and he hoped by my being idle in London, and not receiving any salary, I should make it fly as quickly as a sailor does his money on a return from a voyage, and then be more within the falcon's reach. Now my benefit was very material to me, as I knew I should be favoured with a very good one, though in May, and duty to myself made me serious with him, I therefore boldly told him that I should make my loss of salary and benefit one business in a court of justice, and charge my benefit at 200l.; which added to the breach of article would not be less than two or three hundred more, and would be a good compensation, and added, with a bow and a smile, I could not wish for a better banker to draw upon—what I spoke was truth. He then humm'd and haw'd, and said, "Why really now, why, 'Tate, why now you are d——d ridiculous!" and he walked me into Varney's, the house-keeper's room at the theatre, and sent for Cross: Mr. Lacey was also there, and they settled my benefit for Saturday the 10th of May, and desired Mr. Fox, whom Mr. Lacey said he had a great regard for, might bring in tickets to such a sum as he specified:—

I agreed to the request. The Mr. Fox I mention lives in Bow-street, and I have often from that time to this, at different periods, been obliged to him, and ever found him kind and attentive to serve me; and I have heard Mr. Fox (who was then a young stage candidate) declare, that he was lucky with his tickets, and pleased with Mr. Lacey's desire and allotment.

The play I fixed on was the Distressed Mother: Orestes, Mr. Wilkinson; Hermione, Mrs. Yates; Andromache, by a Gentlewoman; with the prologue to the Author, Lady Pentweazle, and the Upholsterer.

The same reasons, as in Dublin, for not giving my imitations proved, that the like policy was necessary to be still preserved, at least for that year of my adventures and theatrical exploits in London.

The gentlewoman I advertised for her first appearance in Andromache, was no other than the *Mrs. Wier*, whom I have mentioned early in this multifarious history, where I met (luckily or unluckily, as the Fates will determine) with that good old gentleman, Mr. Baker, manager of the York company in October 1758.

If the reader will honour me with the remembrance so long back, of what I fear seems not only trifling but tiresome, he will recollect that I mentioned Mrs. Wier being at that time mistress of a milliner's shop near Pall Mall, where I saw Mrs. Roach, who boldly, and with the spirit of an Amazon, went down to York

to supply Mrs. Dancer's Lady Townly, Indiana, &c. thinking like Kecksy—*who's afraid!*

This Mrs. Wier had been made mistress of an ample well-furnished milliner's shop by Sir Francis Delaval, and properly supplied with all sorts of geer for *gentlewomen*, and eke also for *gentlemen*: Mrs. Wier's shop by no means answered, though Sir Francis Delaval had not spared any expence or recommendation within his power to render it lucrative.

I am bound to speak of this Sir Francis Delaval with reverence and regard, not only for his own partiality and friendship, but for the favours I have been formerly honoured with by the whole family, and obligations of the most pleasing kind; not only at Sir Francis's house, then bordering on Soho-square, but at Seaton Delaval, a few miles from Newcastle: but of that family, of whom I speak so warmly, none remains within my knowledge but Lord and Lady Delaval, whom I have had the honour of seeing frequently at Sir Francis's.—There was no difference in Sir Francis's behaviour whether I saw him in London or farther remote; for many gentlemen wear different faces on seeing an actor in London and seeing him in the country.

Now the milliner's shop, mentioned under the patronage of Sir Francis, not answering in all particulars, and the knight being determined his gentleman's gentlewoman should be quite the thing, took a house for her in Suffolk-street in the Strand, and furnished it as a reception for boarders, that Mrs. Wier might obtain

obtain a livelihood. At that house I had the pleasure of often seeing a very sensible, agreeable, well-bred lady, who occupied the first floor, then Mrs. Ford, but after that she had the honour to be Mrs. Colman; but the foe or friend of mankind, call him which we will, (Mr. Death) did not choose to see such an agreeable and tempting companion out of his clutches, but sneeringly and enviously threw his dart, and with one stroke levelled a fair one, lamented by all who knew her.

But even this lodging-house did not altogether answer for Mrs. Wier, or succeed to her expectations in the round of a twelvemonth's vicissitude. She had ever been fond of plays, and on my return from Ireland, seriously requested she might have a stage-trial on my benefit night; this I consented to, and she was to be the Andromache in the Distressed Mother. On that being settled, I, in three or four days after, received a note from Sir Francis, desiring to see me on particular business in Soho-square: On the afternoon I called it so happened that Mr. Foote was there, with whom I had been on distant terms ever since our breach in March 1759.—This visit was almost immediately after dinner:—Sir Francis expecting me, had desired I might be shewn into another room, knowing his friend Foote's and my antipathy. He instantly came, and laughingly told me, that the business of his note was to inform me he had collected a large party for my benefit; adding, he had a request to make, but must be under the necessity of deferring it till the next

next day; for, says he, your old friend Foote is in the dining-room, and from your late disagreement I judge it will not be agreeable to either, as the meeting will be awkward; adding, he did not know how to act, unless, Wilkinson, you will let me take you by the hand as my particular friend, and as a supposed stranger? I, like Peter Paragraph, by way of reply said, I could not resist the proposed honour of being introduced as Sir Francis Delaval's particular friend; besides, I added, Mr. Foote had, of all persons in the world, the least right to be angry with me for mimicry, and indeed he had been by me interestedly the obliged person; and Mr. Foote had himself declared on Drury-Lane stage, that any imitations of himself, by Mr. Wilkinson, were at the service of the public.

So under the sanction of being Sir Francis's particular guest I entered the room where Foote was, and several other gentlemen; Foote seemed hurt at first, but after the introduction as proposed, he behaved with great politeness.

As the circling glass went round, Mr. Foote grew more cordial and cheerful, and began speaking of tables in the first style of elegance in Ireland and Scotland—that several noblemen's houses in both places were supported with every luxury that a London table could furnish: for if London had the superiority in some particular articles, the other places had in greater perfection what London could not so easily purchase; which made the equality of good things more upon a level than the English would readily admit; but to which Sir Francis would not assent.

assent. And as a trait I have before observed in Foote's character when his real best friend, Sir Francis Delaval, left the room, where there were not less than eight or ten persons, each of whom he knew would relate again what he said, he burst out into a loud laugh, and turning to me said, "Wilkinson! did you ever hear such a hound giving his sentiments on good tables and living?—Since my return from Ireland," added Foote, "I have had the mortification to dine here six times, and each day a d——d large loin of pork on the table, which he calls a dinner!—By G—d I'll not dine here again these three months; for I suppose he means to run his loin of pork against the Beggar's Opera?"—which had been acted a great number of nights at Covent-Garden, Mr. Beard being Macheath; Miss Brent, the Polly:—It was equal to the first run when it came out at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Theatre, 1727—when a wit said, that the Beggar's Opera

Made Rich gay,
And Gay rich.

That piece also occasioned a material event: His Grace the Duke of Bolton was irresistably enslaved by the Syren Polly (Miss Fenton); but neither persuasion, riches, nor settlement, could relax or soften the heart of the fair one; in short, nothing less could purchase her hand and heart than the sharing his honours as the Dukes of Bolton;—to the which he assented, and never had cause to repent, as she filled every

every duty of that high station with becoming dignity—as a duchess, wife, and mother. Admired by all, she enjoyed her unfaded laurels for many years, as the Bolton family can testify.

As to Mr. Foote's remark on the loin of pork, it might be partly true; for though Sir Francis was liberal and extravagant in many points, nicety of food was the last thing he ever thought of; if there was but plenty, he never cared for the quality or the luxuries of a table:—and had he actually heard Foote, he would only have laughed at him, and with him; he knew his foibles, and admired all Foote's sallies of humour that so often set the table in a roar.

Where be his gibes now, his flashes of merriment?

Not one now to mock his own grinning:

Alas! poor Foote!

But Sir Francis was so far even with Foote, that he enjoyed a stroke against him to the full as much as any other person:—He would laugh with Foote when acting Cadwallader, yet was such a mischievous wag, that he would tease Mr. A—ce till he was enraged at Foote:—and all this was give-and-take, fair play:—He was fond of tricks with his guests who visited him at Seaton Delaval. Mr. Obrien, on his return from a visit there, related to me many whimsical frolics which were practised with much joke and good humour; and Mr. Obrien told them in such a manner as made the narrative very entertaining.

When Mr. Foote and the rest of the company departed, Sir Francis detained me in order to relate the request he had hinted at in his note; which was, he said, relative to an alteration of my play:—to change the *Distressed Mother* to that of *Tamerlane*; and that he wished to introduce, instead of Mrs. Pritchard, our old friend Mrs. Wier, whose welfare he had much concern for, and would instruct her in the character of *Arpasia*.

Sir Francis Delaval was greatly attached to the drama, so much so, that it is well remembered, and universally known he acted the part of *Othello* in March 1751, at Drury-Lane theatre, with ladies and gentlemen of fashion of his acquaintance. Sir Francis's person was noble, handsome, and commanding, and very proper to give a striking resemblance of the Moorish General. There is a strong likeness of that great patron of the actors and actresses at Lord Mexborough's, at Methley near Pontefract. To Lord and Lady Mexborough I am under numerous obligations; I could with pleasure say a great deal more, but were I to expatiate on all I feel for the many persons to whom I am indebted for favours, it would fill the largest book that ever was published, and furnish a little library.

Sir John, now Lord Delaval, acted *Iago*, and was pronounced incomparable in judgment and display of abilities, and it was allowed by all to be a critical performance of that difficult character. Applause on that night's acting need not be mentioned, as the reader may be assured it was commanded, and not less merited. Sir Francis
hired

hired the theatre at a very considerable expence, as not only that of a benefit, but the supposed profits of Mr. Garrick's best character for attraction was added to that charge.

The family aided Sir Francis to fill the theatre with their own acquaintance only, which included all the nobility of the three kingdoms then in London, but not any one was admitted without a proper ticket from Sir Francis or his brothers, who had calculated the number the theatre would contain, and that without distinction of places to prevent offence: and in consequence, when the best places were occupied, the upper gallery was as brilliant with stars and garters as the boxes and pit below.

The rehearsals were (I have been told) entirely conducted by my good friend Macklin; Sir Francis held that gentleman in high esteem as his private confidential friend; and when he alluded to the teaching Mrs. Wier Arpasia, he added, Macklin had promised to assist him, which free opinion collectively made me obeisant.

I mention, or rather introduce here the more readily, these theatrical circumstances of Sir Francis Delaval, to account for his stage furor in teaching Mrs. Wier the character of Arpasia, who had many claims on his kindness to instruct her:—We must consider she was the *wife* of one Wier, who had served him faithfully for many years, and had ever assisted Sir Francis in his various attachments; for no sooner was one scheme accomplished but he was on the wing for another.—So Wier was never idle, but was an industrious servant; and it might be said truly of

him that he always had his hands full, and was kept in perpetual employment.

I had not any objection to her playing Arpasia, and he gave me a genteel order for three side-boxes ; for which he paid most liberally, and appointed two or three dozen of his friends to go into the pit.

When the night came there was a very brilliant audience ; my own friends were numerous—Lady Granard, Lady Tyrawley, Mrs. Skelton, Lord Verney, were all there, and filled their separate boxes. Mrs. Wier was well received, as is generally the case with young performers from the candour of a London audience ; but she was languid, timid, and barely reached mediocrity, tho' not by any means laughable or offensively ridiculous ; indeed she began her stage career too late in life, being at that time, as near as I can guess, thirty-five or thirty-six years of age :—She wanted animation and expression for Arpasia. But she has quitted these earthly realms of abode, and has followed her Monefes, and left me, her Bajazet, to bemoan her loss.

This benefit, which I obtained from Garrick with difficulty, proved a very great and pleasing addition to my accumulating funds.

The theatre closed in May, and I, without seeing Mr. Garrick, having then obtained my freedom by the expiration of my article that had existed from October 1757, set off once more on a journey to Portsmouth, where I expected open arms to receive me, but was in my expectations disappointed : for though my friends were as usual glad to see me, the players were quite the reverse.

The

The acting what parts, and reviving what plays I pleased, they represented, in strong terms, as very great innovations on the rules and orders established in their society or common-wealth; as many useful members on that account had withdrawn themselves in disgust, greatly to the prejudice of their business in general.—The Hermoine, Mrs. Daly, expressed herself as greatly injured by my having introduced Miss Morrison and Miss White the year before, who had acted several of her favourite characters. She thus harangued me :—The one, she said, had torn from her royal brows and stock of fame Cleopatra and Hermoine, next the chaste Penelope from the arms of her Ulysses; and not content with that, had actually separated the true Roxana from the love of Alexander: The other rival had stolen, by surprise, Sylvia and Desdemona, &c.;—and was she to be deprived of her honours by an ignoramus?—alluding to Miss White's *Battle-ax*, as mentioned before. Queen Daly proceeded, and, armed with her constant friend the brandy-bottle, pursued her declaration of wrongs and injuries with great prowess and strength of lungs; the surrounding kings and princes, with the lords in waiting, nodded marks of assent and approbation of their Amazonian tragic queen: they rose and voted their thanks, and unanimously resolved in future not to permit any interloper; but on consideration of my past services, they would for the summer season admit me as a sharer, (as they termed it) and to be restricted to only one benefit, and not as the year before two clear benefits. This proposal I would not by any means accept.

—They

—They urged (with truth) that my attraction as to novelty was past, consequently my friends and the public at large, who had made it a business to attend the theatre to see and support me, would in all probability decline their frequency of visits, and reserve their cash to serve me on my benefit night, merely for my particular advantage, which weighed materially with their considerations: So, on their not complying with my expectations and proposals, we parted with mutual disdain, rage, and anger at O. P. and P. S.*

I, like my brethren of the Sock and Buskin, laid the fault, as is natural, on the manager in particular, and to all my friends, I related my grievances, as well as to my best patrons, and sowed the seeds of discord with propitious hands, as they from their partiality to me were much enraged; and it actually was the consequence of their encouraging another playhouse to be built, which is the present theatre.—From trivial causes sometimes matters of importance issue forth, and the banditti (for they were really little better) which existed and exulted (like savage fiends in human shape on the Cornwall coasts, eagerly waiting for a lucky ship-wreck,) on the spoils of war, were soon dispersed by regular forces from Bath; and gin and brandy gave the final period to most of their existences.

* The reader is to understand, O. P. is the side of the stage opposite the prompter, and P. S. the side on which the prompter sits.

At that juncture, (as the war still continued between France and England) July 1760, there was an encampment at Winchester of no less than eight regiments of militia, and the Earl of Effingham's regiment of regulars, under the command of the present Lord's father. The father and son were both there, and there were the greatest number of officers I ever beheld assembled together. This brilliant camp was to be stationed there for the whole summer, unless the boasted French invasion, at that time so much threatened and expected, or some particular occurrence intervened and commanded a removal.

The Bath company, headed by Mr. Griffith and Mr. Keasberry, lured by the fair promise of a plentiful harvest, built a temporary theatre in that city; and finding I was at variance with the grandees of Portsmouth, gave me a very genteel offer to join the forces under their direction, which I accepted with pleasure, as the change was very satisfactory; and for good reasons, as it promised not only to be lucrative but eligible, and particularly pleasant: and another strong charm which it had with me was variety and novelty; two qualities ever predominant with me in all situations, and at that time, from my perpetual change of place, was become habitual. So that for the sake of variety the city or the village had at different times equal charms according to my various dispositions. But either would have given me satiety, if confined to it alone. And could I live as I pleased, now I am writing this in March 1790, I would every six weeks or two months be on different ground, and with a full purse

purse think I could make the whole year very delightful, by being in London, Paris, Bath, Edinburgh, &c.

However to Winchester I went, and found it to a high degree agreeable, and the weather added to make it delightful. It was one of the finest summers I ever remember; and certainly with youth, health, spirits, and money in the pocket, a love of acting, gratified and attended with applause and success at the age of twenty-one years, was an enviable situation not to be described; and all these blessings at that time I enjoyed, which are seldom to be equalled in any situation of life.

The enthusiasm attendant on a young man possessed of public favour, and being the utmost of the possessor's wishes, can only be felt, for it is not to be described;—it is a delusion of magical felicity known to the actor only:—few there are who have at one time that accumulation of good gifts just mentioned, and I really then was blessed with them all. Not that I now can boast those enviable treasures of health, pleasure, &c. but as Lady Pentweazle says, *I have had my day, Mr. Carmine.*—But the stage has now no charms for me; yet *I cannot but remember* “Such things were, and were most precious to me;” and a time, though past, which I reflect on and re-act in my imagination with the greatest satisfaction——

It wakes a glad remembrance of my youth;
Calls back past joys, and warms me into transport.

And

And memory sometimes gives me a great degree of credit and self-approbation for some things—I dare not say all:—who can?—I was then upheld by the good and the great; from which aid all proper gratifications were supplied. But I never forgot the true respect and protection due to my mother, so in some degree I deserved the blessings I enjoyed.

At Winchester I received many favours and civilities, but not from any one so particularly as from the Marquis of Tavistock, eldest son to his Grace the late Duke of Bedford, to whose generosity and kindness I was much obliged.

Miss Ambrose, better known now by the name of Egerton, was a most agreeable young lady, as was also her sister; we used to have frequent parties, and have been from that time on a most friendly intimacy: Miss Ambrose, was that very season my Winchester Beckey.

The comedy of the Minor, that had met so unlucky a fate in Ireland a few months before, was just then printed and published, and was acting with a rage astonishing. It is not describable the crowds of all degrees that crushed in to that little theatre in the Haymarket, night after night in the hottest months of the year. The fashion of not publishing is quite modern, and the favourite pieces not being printed, but kept under lock and key, is of infinite prejudice to us poor devils in the country theatres, as we really cannot afford to pay for the purchase of MSS.—The only time I ever exercised my pen on such an occasion was on a trial of necessity.—Mr. Harris bought that excellent

cellent comic opera of the *Duenna* from Mr. Sheridan ; I saw it several times, and finding it impracticable to move Mr. Harris's tenderness, I locked myself up in my room, set down first the jokes I remembered, then I laid a book of the songs before me, and with magazines kept the regulation of the scenes, and by the help of a numerous collection of obsolete Spanish plays I produced an excellent opera ; I may say *excellent*—and an unprecedented compliment ; for whenever Mr. Younger, or any other country manager wanted a copy of the *Duenna*, Mr. Harris told them they might play Mr. Wilkinson's : hundreds have seen it in every town in Great-Britain and Ireland.—Mrs. Webb has acted the part of the *Duenna* in *my Opera*, as I call it, many nights at Edinburgh—Mr. Suett, the Jew, at York, &c.

While I was at Winchester his Royal Highness the Duke of York, who had honoured my benefit at Portsmouth in 1758, was at Southampton for his health and the advantage of sea-bathing. I must remark that Southampton, in the year 1760, was not frequented as a fashionable place of resort, but it now stands in equal rank with other various *ducking-places* at present in vogue for the autumn part of the summer.

His Royal Highness frequently paid a visit to the officers at the camp, and often honoured the theatre on those visitations ; he recollected first seeing me at Portsmouth, and after at Drury-Lane Theatre in the *Diversions of the Morning*, &c. and having seen the *Minor* on its first representation, just before he had left London for Southampton,

ampton, he sent Col. Pitt to Mr. Keasberry, desiring that piece might be got ready as soon as possible, and Mr. Wilkinson to perform Mr. Foote's characters; and when the comedy was prepared to inform Col. Pitt, and his command might be added at the top of the bill:—This was accordingly done.—By command of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, Wednesday evening, *August 13*, the MINOR.—Indeed the comedy was in study, and would have been soon acted, but the unexpected honour was a most flattering and lucky stroke for *me, the piece, and Mr. Keasberry*: It brought a great house, and obtained uncommon applause, which was increased by the attention and distinguished marks of approbation bestowed by His Royal Highness.—I was honoured with his thanks by Col. Pitt; and when I with Mr. Griffith and Mr. Keasberry lighted his Highness out of the box, he said to me—“Very well indeed, Wilkinson! I shall command it again.”—It was acted four or five times to great houses.

The whole season was indeed a scene of uninterrupted harmony and prosperity with our little community.—Indeed Mr. Keasberry was sometimes obstreperous, and actually turned me out of his house when the morning-gun fired, that being the signal for sending me home to bed. I will here mention a very ludicrous circumstance that happened on the benefit of Mr. Keasberry.—Mr. Griffith, at the latter end of our season, departed for Dublin, being engaged by Mr. Mossop, the first winter of his opposition to Mr. Barry in that city.

Mr.

Mr. Keasberry's benefit was on Wednesday the 1st of October; Alexander the Great was the play, got up with great attention: I was the Alexander, (also the Richard, Lear, &c.) The constant regularity of the Bath company was such, that the reader may be assured there was not any neglect on Mr. Keasberry's night, but all decorations, &c. were ordered fully equal to what could be afforded.—Statira, Miss Ambrose.—All went off with great eclat till the latter part of the fourth act, soon after the death of Clytus.—Some olive leaves, &c. intended for decorations, being twisted and interwoven with little bits of wax, caught fire from the lights, and the flame continuing to blaze the burnt particles occasioned a strong stench—an universal cry of “Fire! fire!” prevailed, on which every person was alarmed; but not one so horridly aghast as the dead Clytus, who had expired by the rage of Alexander: he rose with the agility of a tumbler that would not have disgraced the Royal Circus; his uprise and exit were so quick, that he threw the immortal Alexander on his back. The late noble Earl of Effingham, who was remarkably corpulent, evinced equal alacrity with dead nimble-footed Clytus, and gave evident proofs of superior agility; for instead of making his way to the box-door, he with one spring of the utmost ease, swiftness, and dexterity, vaulted over the side-box, and lighted on his feet on a row in the middle of the pit, standing erect; the seat gave proof to the credit of the carpenter; for it did not yield, but firmly supported its ponderous and noble weight.

In

In a few minutes the trifling cause that occasioned this universal panic subsided, and was soon extinguished; the audience called to order, the ladies instead of fainting, being surrounded by martial heroes, smiled; Lord Effingham returned to his box, but not by the way he went into the pit: No sooner was his Lordship settled in *statu quo* than all the gentlemen of the army (for he was universally beloved) gave a general salutation, which his Lordship returned, and after a hearty laugh on all sides the play was ordered to go on, and old grey-headed Clytus made his second appearance after death, and prostrated himself once more a victim at the feet of Alexander. It appeared so truly ridiculous, that the convulsive fits of laughter which involuntarily ensued, may easier be conceived than described; it was truly whimsical, and mutually entertaining. Joy and fear generally run into extremes, as was the case; for the remaining part of the fourth act of the tragic-comedy was all laughter: The distressed princess Statira in her alarm had not caught up a blanket (Hecuba like), but actually ran out of her thatched palace to the friendly refuge and asylum of the first clay-cold ditch that opened to receive her; and having recovered from her fears, returned well escorted to our court of Babylon. So harmony being restored, with a pause for composure before the fifth act commenced, serious faces were once more resumed, and Alexander ordered to be interred in the temple of Jupiter Ammon with all honours, and without disturbance to his remains.

This

This anecdote of Winchester had escaped my memory had it not been refreshed by a gentleman of fashion who was present at that night's exhibition, and with whom I had the pleasure of supping at Mr. Broadhead's in Portland Place, March 1787, where Mr. Kemble was also at table.—Indeed the present Lord Effingham remembers it perfectly well. As I have taken the liberty to introduce here the late and the present Lord Effingham, I think it highly incumbent for me publicly to acknowledge the favours conferred on me by the late Lord Effingham, at that time at Winchester; and in consequence thereof I have been much honoured, since, by the present Lord and Lady Effingham, for whom I truly hold the most profound and respectful gratitude.

The success of the *Minor* made me desire a week's furlow to see Mr. Foote perform his characters in the meridian of its glory, which request was complied with.

It had received much retouching and many alterations by the ingenious hand of Mr. Foote, since I had seen it the winter before in Ireland.—The Introduction, Smirk the auctioneer, and Dr. Squintum's Epilogue, were all entirely new. I went two or three nights, but with great difficulty got admittance, the crowds to see it were so numerous. I took that opportunity of hiring a post-chaise for the day to visit Cowley, meaning once more to claim and renew my acquaintance with Mr. Rich, who was then at his country-seat; but it was not attended with the success I wished: he was very civil, but the play-bill from Winchester, though aggrandized with his Royal High-

ness

ness the Duke of York's patronage, had not the effect I expected it would have had: One hour was the full length of our *tete-a-tete*. However I did not repent my journey to London, as I had mended my performances in the Minor by seeing Mr. Foote's playing the parts, and the better prepared for my next acting of them at Winchester, which happened a few days after my return.

I judged, though Mr. Rich and I had not then agreed, it might be brought about, and if not, by my utility and consequence to the company at Winchester, and my friendship with Mr. Keasberry, I depended to a certainty on his interest to explain and speak so favourably of me to Mr. Arthur, manager of the Bath theatre, that I should secure a principal engagement there for the winter; and believe, had I been reduced to have made the experiment, I should not have flattered myself with wrong conjectures, as I am certain Mr. Keasberry would have done any thing to have served me, and Mr. Arthur, (a sordid character) would have found it such an agreement as would have answered his purpose, as indeed it afterwards proved, though not that very year.

I must not omit to mention, it was the best bred audience at Winchester I ever saw; I do not remember when any thing went accidentally wrong on the stage, a single instance of sneering or ill-nature. It was from the beginning of the season till the ending, a continued scene of the most perfect good breeding that could be conceived or practised; and they were always ready to assist and
relieve

relieve the performers when embarrassed, and never, by loud talking and affected contempt or rudeness, disturbed the theatre or distressed the actor. And to the credit of the Bath company at Winchester be it recorded, though their incomes were not superabundant or superfluous, though an amazing concourse of people; in the time of war, and provisions not cheap, but scarce and high priced, yet I do not believe one guinea was owing in the town of Winchester from a single actor, or the whole collected company of comedians.—*O tempora! O mores!*

This trip from Bath was to the advantage of the players; yet the gentlemen of the army deemed it a compliment to themselves, and as such requisite for them to make a return for what they esteemed a favour: and indeed they were all, from the general down to the ensign, kept to the strictest military duty. What a relief certainly must a decent well-conducted little theatre have been to themselves and their variety of visitors from all parts of the kingdom, who came by way of respect to see their friends in the camp and the general grand review, and also as a pleasant trip of relaxation from London? I do not believe in the course of twelve weeks, three gentlemen ever attempted to get behind the scenes during the representation: for though the step was easy from the pit to the stage, the decorum was such that I do not recollect a single infringement. I did twice or thrice see Lord Effingham and the Marquis of Tavistock, and that chiefly on account of benefits: Not that we were destitute of female attraction. Mrs. Egerton (then Miss Ambrose,

Ambrose, the Statira) made strong impressions on several ; but on no one of note with such unmerciful havock as on the heart of the Marquis of Tavistock. I have entertained doubts that he subdued the fortress ; for to my knowledge the Marquis offered large and munificent terms for capitulation with all the honours of war, with " such accommodation and besort as levelled " with her breeding." But when women stand a siege they are hard to be conquered, and generally subdue the boldest. If she had capitulated and yielded at discretion, she would have been more envied than censured : for I had then never seen the universal great and good qualities of the mind, and elegance of figure, so conspicuously united in one man, as I did in the Marquis of Tavistock. He was indeed when he died a loss to his illustrious family, his friends, and the nation, and as an individual, a great one to me ; and will by me, ever while I have memory to recollect, be mentioned with regard for his goodness and the partiality he honoured me with. Those who recollect the Marquis will not think I have said too much, but rather given a faint drawing of the original. As the Marquis never forgot he was a man of quality and a soldier ; so he never gave his inferiors cause to imagine he was not speaking to a gentleman.

Having made my observations on the extraordinary elegant demeanor of that noble military audience, I beg to be permitted to express what I have often felt for myself, and sympathized on the same account with my fellow comedians,

comedians, when not only wantonly insulted, but too often by the willfully rude behaviour from different parts of the theatre. I do not mean to confine it to the front, side, or stage boxes; though it is no more strange than true, that it too often comes from those places of most fashionable resort.—There surely is nothing so barbarous, so uncivilized, so unlike a real gentleman, as the exercising this inhuman, this torturing, affected disposition; for after all it proceeds in fact from affectation, the overflow of youthful minds, primed by the circling glass: Even the ladies are not always blameless in this respect, but excite their own mirth, by the putting their fellow creatures on the rack; surely the possessor of delicate feelings would shudder at knowing he or she was the cause of such misery. And is it not excruciating when you work upon the mind of another? The physician can administer for all ills but that, and therein Dr. Shakspeare says,

The patient must administer to himself.

I do not mean to dictate to persons who honour the theatre often that they are to be under the confinement of constant attention; (for most of the good houses are perhaps on fashionable nights, when, as to what the play is, does not signify the flirt of a fan), but they should avoid behaviour, which in a foreign theatre would not be tolerated. And only let the feeling mind reflect what a lessening to beauty and fortune, what a distortion such strange fits occasion, when they

they so far forget themselves as to descend to a level with their *deemed* inferiors, and put that beauty into the hands of an ill-natured painter: for players, *by the bye*, are painters, and though not bred artists, can sometimes steal from Shakspeare's portraits, and produce so strong a caricature, that though they may laugh, it does not give pleasure to their all seeming gaiety: For acting is not confined to the stage—but

All men and women are merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances.

All the modes of distressing actors and audiences, effectually baffle every effort from the performer: for he is immediately told by such insinuation, that he is a person of inferiority, who no body knows, though possibly a real gentleman and of family (though not a son of Fortune, but Misfortune) and is in consequence degraded as the player; his attempts immediately vanish, and the mock prince sinks suddenly to Mr. *A.* or Mr. *B.* and he must rest quiet (without hazarding the incurring of spleen, anger, &c.) and *submit* to such usurping tyranny as would disgrace the very inflictors to practice on their most menial dependents. O! ladies and gentlemen only reflect on the fable of the boys and the frogs——

That what is sport to you, is death to us.

Would that such laughers did more respect themselves! could they behold the mirror at
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the moment, they would soon perceive by change of countenance that Dr. Young spoke truth, when he said of woman——

That Heaven is pleased to make distress become her,
And dresses her most amiably in tears.

And what is more extraordinary in this mode of wantonness (for I can term it no other) is, that these persons limit their demeanor according to the place they are in. At Edinburgh or Bath, rarely such littleness is seen from superiority; so much the contrary, that the Twigs of Fashion from every county, when in the boxes at Bath or London, sit as gentle as lambs, and are astonished at the barbarity of any noise whatever, that may in the least disturb the favourite actor or actresses. But here let the topic rest; for unless the true feelings of ladies and gentlemen will aid to constitute that amiable character, and plead in their breasts in behalf of stage tragedy-heroes, and stage-ladies of quality, all I can urge would be of no effect.

I remember some persons being called to order in the side boxes from the pit, when *Virginia* was acting at Drury-Lane. Mrs. Cibber acted that part, after which she had to speak the following lines in the epilogue; which had a most wonderful effect on the aggressors, and was outrageously relished by the applauding audience.—

May I approach unto the boxes pray,
And there search out a judgment on the play?
In vain alas! I should attempt to find it!
Fine ladies see a play, but never mind it:
'Tis vulgar to be mov'd by acted passion,
Or form opinions till they're fixed by Fashion.

Most

Most theatrical histories are made up by pages upon pages from Cibber, Betterton, Victor, Davies, and others, so in fact they are no more than complements, which makes me unwilling to give the following extract from Cibber; but as he is clever, and I naturally wish prosperity to the *sock* and *buskin*, I think a few lines from so able a master will be more acceptable than any thing I can offer on the subject.

Cibber says, "Notwithstanding all my best endeavours to recommend the profession of an actor to a more general favour, I doubt while he is liable to more unlimited insults, as I have already mentioned; I doubt I say, we must still leave him a-drift with his intrinsic merit, to ride out the storm as well as he is able.

"However let us now turn to the other side of this account and see what advantages stand there to balance the misfortunes I have laid before you. There we shall still find some valuable articles of credit, that sometimes over-pay his incidental disgraces.

"First, if he has sense he will consider, that as these indignities are seldom or *ever* offered him by people that are remarkable *for any one good quality*, he ought not to lay them too close to his heart: He will know too, that when malice, envy, or brutal nature, can securely hide or fence themselves in a multitude, virtue, merit, innocence, and even sovereign superiority have been, and must be, equally liable to their insults; that therefore when they fall upon him in the same manner, his intrinsic value cannot be diminished by them: On the contrary, if

with a decent and unruffled temper he lets them pass, the disgrace will return upon his aggressor, and perhaps warm the generous spectator into a partiality in his favour. That while he is conscious that as an actor, he must be always in the hands of injustice, it does him at least this involuntary good, that it keeps him in a settled resolution to avoid all occasions of provoking it, or of even offending the lowest enemy, who at the expence of a shilling may publicly revenge it. That if he excels on the stage, and is irreproachable in his personal morals and behaviour, his profession is so far from being an impediment, that it will be oftener a just reason for his being received among people of condition with favour, and sometimes with a more social distinction, than the best though more profitable trade he might have followed could have recommended him to.

“What a blessing, therefore, is it—what an enjoyed deliverance! after an actor has been driven by fortune to stand so many wanton buffets of unmanly fierceness, to find himself at last quietly lifted above the reach of them.—Now, though I have sometimes known these gallant insulters of audiences draw themselves into scrapes which they have less honourably got out of, yet, alas! what has that availed:—This generous public-spirited method of silencing a few, was but repelling the disease in one part to make it break out in another. All endeavours at protection are new provocations to those who pride themselves in pushing their courage to a defiance of humanity. Even when a royal re-
sentment

resentment has shewn itself in the behalf of an injured actor, it has been unable to defend him from farther insults! An instance of which happened in the late King James's time. Mr. Smith (whose character as a gentleman could have been no way impeached, had he not degraded it by being a celebrated actor) had the misfortune in a dispute with a gentleman behind the scenes to receive a blow from him: The same night an account of this action was carried to the King, to whom the gentleman was represented so grossly in the wrong, that the next day his Majesty sent to forbid him the court upon it. This indignity cast upon a gentleman, only for having maltreated a player, was looked upon as the concern of every gentleman; and a party was soon formed to assert and vindicate their honour by humbling this favoured actor, whose slight injury had been judged equal to so severe a notice. Accordingly the next time Smith acted he was received with a chorus of cat-calls, that soon convinced him he should not be suffered to proceed in his part: upon which, without the least discomposure, he ordered the curtain to be dropped; and having a competent fortune of his own, thought the conditions of adding to it, by his remaining upon the stage, were too dear, and from that day entirely quitted it. I shall make no observation upon the King's resentment, or on that of his good subjects; how far either was or was not right, is not the point I dispute for. Be that as it may, the unhappy condition of the actor, was so far from being relieved by his royal interposition

terposition in his favour, that it was the worse for it. While these sort of real distresses, on the stage are so unavoidable, it is no wonder that young people of sense (though of low fortune) should be so rarely found to supply a succession of good actors.—Why then may we not in some measure, impute the scarcity of them to the wanton inhumanity of those spectators who have made it so terribly mean to appear there? Were there no ground for this question, where could be the disgrace of entering into a society, whose institution, when not abused, is a delightful school of morality; and where to excel requires as ample endowments of nature as any one profession (that of Holy Institution excepted) whatsoever?—But, alas! as Shakspeare says——

Where's that palace whereinto sometimes
Foul things intrude not?——

The best things are liable to corruption, and the errors of a theatre is no disproof of its innate and primitive utility.”

Garrick observed, that twenty-four years playing the fool claimed allowance for such tedious labour. Now I have been thirty-three years in this perplexing business, with infirmities helping to enfeeble; and it is not in my power or inclination to be much longer an actor. An old man (it has been observed by an eminent writer) acted well by a young one is truly entertaining; but performed by a real old man is lamentable, and not to be borne. It is therefore evident men should

should quit the stage (if practicable) at a certain time of life, and women earlier, lest they incur with Prior's Lady—

Pity Betterton in age,
That ridicules the Godlike rage.

Not but a good old woman is on the stage, as well as in life, at any time worth fifty bad young ones. A gentleman, like-manner, being tipsy, naturally exhibited, is very pleasant; but a *real* drunken man we will kindly suppose never was or ever will be seen on the stage.

Having been so free on the supposition of being a spectator, I cannot in idea take leave of the stage with an easy mind and sit quiet, unless I speak of what is much more reprehensible, and a more egregious fault in performers, than any I have mentioned or can insert of an audience.

Many allowances from accident may be made for young persons of rank in their *gaieté de cœur*; but what can be said for the outrages or rather audacious behaviour of too many performers, who thunder out their disapprobation and the cruel insults they receive occasionally from the audience; but would such performers more strictly adhere to their duty, and preserve more their own propriety, they could then with more reason and real justice complain. It grieves me to say the conduct of players on the stage is too often unjustifiable, and not to be defended, and should always be reprehended by the audience in the severest degree. They should consider that Mr. Garrick, who had attained an immense

fortune, when on the boards, laid himself liable to the censure or applause of the audience.

As an instance that the audience know their power, the late lively-spirited, good-natured Nicholson Stewart of Edinburgh, a man of family and fortune, who knew every gentleman and lady in that city without exception, when he presented himself on the stage for Hamlet, Romeo, or Pierre, (whenever he acted it was always for a public charity) the audience did not pay their money to set up their friend as an idol, unless he proved himself worthy to be worshipped; and though that gentleman did actually possess sterling merit, yet he wanted much to make a complete Hamlet or a perfect Pierre, but as a stage-struck genius (like Mr. Vapid) they would judge of him as to his merits more or less as an actor.

It is not so easy to mount the stage and please as many imagine; for when the audience were informed Mr. Stewart (on the night of his acting Pierre) had fallen down a trap, and thereby put a stop to the play for a short space, the impannelled jury of the pit, instead of commiserating his painful tumble, burst out into an involuntary roar of laughter——Dr. Franklin says,

The Critic first we banish from our session,
Death is his trade, and damning his profession :
Disqualified, because (to say no further)
Butchers are never heard in case of murder.

But had that gentleman (Mr. Stewart) been in a room with any of those persons, and fallen down or fainted, every one would have been most

most anxiously concerned, and have run to his assistance.

An actor should consider that when the first man in a county sets up for a member of parliament, he is obliged to solicit and use humiliating application, (aye, and the right application too) if he hopes to gain his election; but then he has the happy consolation to know and feel *it is all for the good of his country.*

From the king to the minister, and from the minister to the king, at times, disagreeable condescension must in some degree happen:—It is humiliating when the most despotic monarch cannot carry all his points:—France and Germany have lately afforded striking instances.—*The cobbler and his last* should never be forgotten;—and no man by any means feels the least mortification or disappointment in a more stinging degree than the very proud man, who looks down even on his equals with a haughty and supercilious eye: therefore when such a great character is seen not deigning to look at or know you, there yet is a certain consolation, that *that* very great man has often checks that cut him to the soul, gall his pride, and make him miserable, and the least trifle of slight from his superior is insupportable and irritating to the end of his life.—The actor or the poor man feels it only momentarily, for at the corner of the next street he possibly meets a real gentleman who makes double and treble amends, and the proud man is no more thought of but as he deserves.

There are many who profess to the actor great friendship by giving him an invitation for the evening,

evening, but the day after do not know how to meet him with civility, lest the common easy mode of behaviour should occasion a contagion or appear disgraceful to themselves:—Indeed I have not much reason to complain of this, but I have seen it often practised—though seldom in the metropolis.

I have not any right to animadvert on the private conduct of actors, for there are at the theatres many whose rectitude is so praiseworthy, that I might take lessons, and wish to equal and emulate them.

Actors are too likely from their nocturnal line of revels and conviviality, to be led into the love of company, which begets a cheerful glass, the cheerful glass begets a late hour, and these habits increase into a custom (as with myself) and cause a thousand frailties, follies and faults, and too often occasion terrible neglect at the fountain head, the theatre, from whence all their real credit and reputation must spring: I therefore intreat and beseech, if the performers sincerely wish the stage to be respectable, that they will produce samples of regularity and attention, and I will venture to affirm the reformation will not pass unobserved.

If a superior is obliged to act his part in life, the comedian should know his name as is in the bill to act the part announced to the public, and that he should execute it to the best of his abilities; more cannot be expected.—But how can he or she expect attention or regard from an audience, when the performers so frequently treat that audience with freedom, nay apparent neglect?

neglect? and nothing but severe reprobation and anger will effectually cure laughing at the audience, and entertaining themselves with low indecent jokes and a volley of oaths not in the parts, and often spoke of to their great discredit at the tabernacle, and too often the manager blamed for not preventing such impromptu's, which is not in his power, and even the females staring into the stage-boxes and smiling at their acquaintance, acting all to the pit, not directing their discourse to the person on the stage, and Horatio, though so enjoined to attend the business of the play, employs all that time by apparently numbering the house.

If the actors wish for regard, they should treat the theatre each morning certainly with the same degree of respect they would observe in the most common school-room; rehearse the play with serious attention, and not with riot and discord; thereby giving the stage opponents such full scope to exclaim, that the theatre proves itself a school of anarchy and disorder by the perpetual slander many performers bestow on their colleagues: For 10l. more in one house on a benefit than in another, will raise a jealousy not to be subdued for a month.

A little application to the study of authors and criticisms in general would mend many actors and actresses; but rehearsals too frequently resemble a game at school-boys play, and instead of preparing for the stage like gentlemen, they are acting in the style and behaviour of Christmas-street country mummers.

Do

Do not let the reader conceive the theatre such a bear-garden as to render this picture necessary for the performers in the country in general, far from it; I am only speaking the sentiments of liberal minds, who are hurt at seeing such vulgar and unpardonable behaviour from a few egregiously ill-bred, whom reasoning would only inflame and make their company still worse: and the audience have often too much patience when they pass over such repeated faults by too much indulgence, which the wrong-headed actor places to approbation and his own merit.

It is not arrogant or presumptive to allege, that many gentlemen and ladies of the stage have deserved and received every respectful compliment, and that real gentlemen of family have been actors with credit to themselves and their connections, and that persons of no pedigree have proved themselves ornaments to the stage and to human nature, by the assistance only of amazing genius and talents, and that such have arrived to the summit of perfection, is as evident as the noon-day sun, and will be continuing to arise occasionally (like comets) till time shall be no more.

We all have our faults, as actors and actresses in the world's drama, and without being too hard on the stage—let each go pluck the beam out of his own eye, and then he will see clearly to pluck the mote out of his brother's eye. Actors before they wish to expose the errors of each other, which, when exaggerated, they blazon trifles, like making mountains of mole-hills, or resembling

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bling the story of the three black crows,—a gentleman in his illness having discharged something almost as black as a crow.

As to the good word of a methodist it cannot be expected; because if real charity or candour is wanted, it is much more likely to come from the stage than from a conventicle; and a methodist and a player, like a spider and a toad, are natural enemies, each party using his lungs in hopes of a crowded benefit.

Actors should never run into debt (a hard injunction!) for they may be assured a day of payment will be expected, and what is worse, that *one* such black sheep gives the idea of dishonesty to a whole troop; which is very hard, and might with as much propriety be thrown on any other profession, that many should be blamed for the faults of a few.

Running into debts that can be avoided lessens in every degree the actor's darling passion, that is, his ideal consequence; and there is another that actors incur, which manifests negligence, and is, as Mr. Garrick told Shuter, *not to be too comical*. O comical actor! it is a debt, and a dangerous debt, not easily forgot or forgiven; for how can the performer think that though perhaps the town last night laughed and gave indulgence that he is free? so far from it, he has lost the golden ore, their good opinion, and it will take a long time to regain it: For the actor is dreadfully wrong who thinks, because himself and friends laugh at what is termed jokes out of all *time, place, and character*, it is forgiven in general, and not set down against him, and
mentioned

mentioned for a twelvemonth at least with spleen and rancour by the judicious; and though this may be cruel, it is in some degree just, and should not be so frequently deserved. I would have all thirst for applause, but let the means pursued be professional and characteristic to deserve it.

In London an actor must be at least near right before he is established; out of London an actor seldom gets into favour and popularity, but he too frequently in consequence leaves the right road for the wrong, that is, he studies to quit nature, and endeavours to obtain *false* applause by any means, no matter how acquired:—"that is villainous," and in the end it destroys the good seeds of promise, and proves a pitiful ambition in the knave that uses it, be it a tragedian or comedian; for the same ill-judged means may be practised as much almost by the one as the other. In the green-room the jokes on this occasion are "bringing them down;" and "we have been running our lengths."

Laughing on the stage at our own witticisms is another lamentable, not comical fault:—Not that I would mean to be so rigid as not to allow for an accident, or once in a way a well-timed joke, provided it suits time, place, and character. If the joke be ever so good, yet if the actor is performing as a Spaniard or a Frenchman, and reprobates either, all wit or sense is destroyed, and the actor truly censurable.

Mr. Garrick was perhaps the most rigid man in the world as to this discipline, yet I remember a sly joke whispered by Mrs. Clive in *her good humour*,

mour, that put Mr. Garrick so off his guard, that he was seized with a fit of laughing, and that so violently, that he could not finish the *Way to Keep Him*, but was obliged, after two or three efforts, to make his bow amidst a roar of electrical laughter. But this was merely the effect of chance, and perhaps never before occurred in his life-time, so as to be really mastered by the whim of the Flying Meteor; it was therefore not only very justly pardoned, but enjoyed and applauded. Had even Mr. Garrick the next night done the same, it would have been very properly judged the greatest contempt that could be offered, nor would he have forgiven himself; and had he been ten Garricks in one, he would not have escaped censure and disapprobation,—For though an audience may laugh out of place, yet it is the actor's profession, and that profession cannot be so truly degraded as when the professors turn the most difficult art in the world, to arrive at excellence in, into ridicule, and tell the audience it is not such a character before them, but the humorous negligent Mr. Wou'd-be the actor.

A circumstance relating to laughter on the stage once occurred to myself at the Haymarket theatre in 1764, and as I have been mentioning errors in most theatres, permitted out of London from too great lenity, it leads me to point out a proper cure for the fault of laughing.—I was that year an established favourite in London. One evening as Mr. Foote and myself were acting *Tragedy A-la-Mode*, the farce was going on with high relish; but in my dying scene of *Golcondas* something ludicrous occurred and I laughed, Mr. Foote
laughed,

laughed, and then the audience laughed, and all was pleasantry, good humour, approbation, and the curtain dropped with mutual satisfaction. The next night as I was performing the same part at the same place, I again took the same liberty to be comical, but it was where I should have been sad, and an universal severe hiss, with strong marks of anger, resounded throughout the whole theatre, which changed my merriment, and convinced me of the impropriety and error I had been guilty of, by making me feel the only effectual means and mode of correction, and I have remembered the lesson ever since, and wish every actor and actress, who take the same presumptive freedom with an audience, would *read* this and *remember me*.

How foolish does a giggling man or woman appear in company, when, like Wowski, they grin, shew teeth, and laugh without knowing for why? but what can look so truly ridiculous as *performers* laughing out of character at they know not what?—Out of the metropolis, actors dress many footmen like boors, which would lead a cockney, on seeing a play out of London, to imagine many gentlemen's servants in the country were as different in materials and sagacious qualities, as a Bath turnspit compared to a lady's Italian greyhound.—Another reformation necessary is, the great composure with which ladies and gentlemen on the stage throw elegant bound volumes, &c. into ponds, rivers, &c. which cannot occur in genteel life, unless by great surprise, illness, or unexpected insanity.

Stage

Stage monarchs and heroes that o'erstep the modesty of nature in blank verse may be permitted to throw valuable trinkets about at pleasure—It is not out of character for the usurping Richard to to's away the prayer-book as disagreeable and useless after the lord mayor has taken his leave, for it has served his end, and is to him then like lumber, fit only to be thrown aside and scorned. Those actions, too frequently practised and permitted in the theatre, as the fine gentleman in modern life, are a violation of all probability, character, and decorum. When Mr. Reddish first performed in Dublin, he inserted a paragraph informing the public that he was a gentleman of easy fortune: But as he was acting Sir John Dorilant in the School for Lovers, and walking in his garden, perusing a book most elegantly bound, on the approach of his beloved Celia he threw the handsome volume into a ditch: A gentleman in the pit seeing him do so, said to Mr. Macklin, who sat near him, "Pray, Sir, do you think that conduct natural?" "Why, no, Sir," replied Macklin gravely, "not as Sir John Dorilant, but strictly natural as Mr. Reddish: for you know, Sir, he has advertised himself as a gentleman of easy fortune."

Letters on the stage are in general wrote in as little time as signing the name only would require, and signing the name in less than the two initial letters.

I fear I have tired my gracious reader;—but if out of ninety and nine I can reform one actor, I obtain a theatrical proselyte for his own and the public

public good, I gain my end, and solicit forgiveness for my tediousness.

I have made so many professions as to my Winchester partiality, that I think my veracity must be doubted, by having so long neglected my indispensable duty at the camp theatre, and return now, not as a deserter, but a willing volunteer, and mention that my benefit was on Friday, September 12, and was honoured with every attendance I could possibly hope for.—The play was *The Confederacy*; my *Dish of Tea*, with the farce of *Lethe*:—I played *Mrs. Amlet*, *Lord Chalkstone*, and the *Old Man*. I had many genteel presents from *Lord Tavistock*, and several of the leading gentlemen of the army. About that time *Mr. Garrick* had some dispute and quarrel with my friend *Mr. Macklin*, and had to a certainty purloined his favourite farce of *Love A-la-Mode*, then in high rage of fashion with the public, both from its novelty and real attractive merits; and so eager was he to hurt (if possible) *Mr. Macklin's* property in that excellent piece, that he wished to do it by the means of a division of the spoils, as *Macklin* was engaged at *Covent-Garden*: Nay, it is evident, to have obtained that desired object, he would have run the hazard of a law-suit, though he knew it must have ended to his dishonour; but in that instance his spleen outwent his policy, as the insertion of the following letters to me will decidedly prove. I never mentioned the matter to *Mr. Macklin*, as it would have caused mischief between him and *Mr. Garrick*.

DEAR

“ DEAR SIR,

“ THE managers have desired me to inform
 “ you that if you play the Scotchman in Love
 “ A-la-Mode, they will give you for every time
 “ that you shall perform the part two guineas;
 “ and if you mingle in the other business, you shall
 “ have your old salary besides, and a benefit in
 “ course of salary when you return from Ireland.
 “ I wish you had called upon me when in town,
 “ for I always think that matters are sooner ad-
 “ justed by one meeting of the parties than by a
 “ thousand letters. The managers desire their
 “ compliments to you. I am, dear Sir,

“ Your most obedient

“ Very humble servant,

25 August, 1760.

“ GEO. GARRICK.”

“ P. S. Pray send an answer by return of the
 “ post, for I am going out of town soon.”

DEAR SIR,

“ I HAVE communicated the contents of your
 “ last to the managers, and they think you are too
 “ hard with them.—They are willing to give you
 “ two guineas for every time that you shall play
 “ Sir Archy, and will engage that you shall play
 “ it fifteen times at least, and that you shall have
 “ your old salary, be permitted to make your ex-
 “ cursions, during which time you are not to re-
 “ ceive any salary; but if you return before the
 “ benefits, or shall play in any of their nights at
 “ your return, that then your salary shall be con-
 “ tinued

“tinued from the time of your return, and you
 “be entitled to your benefit into the bargain—
 “they cannot possibly do more. If the terms are
 “agreeable to you, please to let my brother know,
 “for I go into Derbyshire on Monday next, and
 “they will send you the part directly.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your most obedient,

“Humble servant,

“GEO. GARRICK.”

4th September, 1760.

“SIR,

“Hampton, Sept. 18, 1760.

“I RECEIVED yours, and shall answer it directly.—I can scarcely think that you are in earnest with us from your last proposition.—You must know that it is impossible, from the nature of a theatre, to let you have a benefit before Christmas: you must fix with us, or be off immediately. Mr. Lacey and I will agree to give the two guineas per night for the acting Sir Archy; and during the run, or as long as that farce continues to be acted we will allow you your former salary. When the farce is laid aside you shall have liberty to go adventuring, and when you return shall have a benefit as usual; and if employed in Sir Archy, or otherwise, your salary shall be continued to you.—This is proposed to you to hinder any more correspondence.—Say *aye* or *no* in your next by the next post; and we desire that you will keep this matter a *profound*
secret

" *secret*, and study the part in all haste, and *secretly*. I am, dear Sir,

" Your truly well-wisher

" And humble servant,

" D. GARRICK."

These epistles remind me—————

An open foe may prove a curse ;
But a pretended friend is worse.

The terms offered in those letters were truly despicable for the considered undertaking. Surely the labourer deserves his hire, particularly as it was really a service of danger which he artfully wished me to undertake ? for I was to engage and fight : and if any spoils or harvest was to be acquired from the field of battle, he intended, like generals of *former* ages, to have reaped all the advantages himself ; I therefore positively declined any engagement whatever—Falstaff like I would no more into the buck-basket, rather preferring a winter situation out of London, than to be hampered by Mr. Garrick as his hobby-horse, unless well paid for all his cutting and flashing. Notwithstanding Mr. Rich had refused my proffered services, (which seldom are held in value) before I made my determination how to arrange my engagements, I once more steered for dear London, and left Winchester in the middle of October, to see what was going forward in the great world ; but not with likelihood of any continuance there that year of our Lord. On the day of my departure Lord Tavistock honoured me with a present

sent of fruit in a hamper well packed ; I set off highly gratified with the gift, but much more so from the very flattering kindness of the compliment, than by the value of the donation : and to prove how good events are sometimes produced by trifles, as once on a time the cackling of geese saved a city, so I, on my arrival in London, judged that this hamper of Bury pears, &c. would be a genteel and very acceptable present to Mr. Rich, and more so, as the fruit would keep with care for some weeks at that season of the year ; and I added to the said hamper a very fine hare. In London these things are esteemed presents, but in Yorkshire I am under such constant obligations to my friends, that I have not the least reason to regret I am not a sportsman to be my own provider, or not possessed of park or gamekeeper, as I have constantly some kind remembrancer that supplies me.

The present to Mr. Rich procured me an invitation to dine with him, which favour I did not accept, but paid my devoirs to him at his morning levees.——My old master, Rich, one day said to me, “ *Muste Williamskin*, you are much improved since I first began to *larn* you ; I think I must engage you.—Name your terms.” I then proposed (on that hint) a plan for such a number of nights rather than for the season :—He instantly agreed, and Mr. Foote’s Minor was fixed on for immediate preparation ; nay, he deigned to desire me to cast the parts, I was in such sudden favour ; as he said, with truth, he knew nothing of *Muste Foote’s* farce. Mrs. Rich was a Methodist,—not that I mention it as a recommendation,

or

or that she was a better Christian for bowing at the shrine of Nonsense and Hypocrisy.—Mr. Foote's lash on Methodism at that time was severely felt by that sect; their composition is gloom, melancholy, envy, and spleen; cheerfulness is seldom observed to dawn on their countenances. Notwithstanding their boasted inspirations, if Methodist preachers had a little reflection, what must they think of daring to pronounce every theatre the devil's house, and all the players the devil's children! I hope they are joking:—and though it may be joking, I am sorry to say it is wicked. To make a complete actor requires more requisites to universally excel than almost any other profession whatever.

The amazing powers displayed by a Garrick, a Barry, a Mrs. Cibber, and a Siddons, and many others, is evidently the hand of God:—He alone could give the finish to such intrinsic merit. And that the Almighty has intended them for that very work is evident; which, if not so produced, the world would have lost seeing the highest pitch of admiration the human frame can aspire to. To mention Shakspeare only, proves more than all the before-mentioned persons, as he is a host, and stands unequalled, as a moral writer, in many points, as well the wonder of the world, as an universal genius.

I do not wish to insinuate that *every* Methodist is an hypocrite, but I mean that I think the greatest part are really so:—So of the preachers, I believe, there are some in earnest, though I fear the number might be easily told. When persons get to the height of a Whitfield and a Wesley's fame
for

for acting, there is a pride as well as a duty in behaving well; and they both laboured hard: but I dare say neither of those gentlemen ever refused a golden ticket for their separate benefits any more than I ever did.—O yes, *I actually did once refuse five guineas at York!* but I was *modest* and rejected it; I expected it to be offered a second time—It was not; what then? Why then I was *disappointed*, and never will be so foolish again, if opportunity offers.—Let one of the tabernacle boast the same—they know better—and that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. But, O ye saints of your own creating! I will preach to you—Mark! *Judge not of plays and players, lest you be judged.*

Those who are the most censorious on the infirmities of others, are usually most notoriously guilty of far greater failings themselves; and sanctified Methodistical slander is, of all, the most severe, bitter, and cruel, and is so easily distinguished, unless by the elect, that it is not worth while dwelling any longer upon it.

In the comedy of the Hypocrite the Colonel says, he supposes they go to the play for the benefit of the brethren:—Cantwell answers, “The charity covereth the sin:”—which was actually the case; for in the year 1757, as Shuter was bountiful to the tabernacle, Mr. Whitfield not only permitted, but advised his hearers to attend Shuter’s benefit; but (*a-la-mode theatre*) for that night only.

A preacher at Hull was once in distress and imprisoned; I actually sent him a leg of mutton and turneps: previous to that I had been an attendant

dant at his tabernacle; he entertained great hopes of my conversion, and I certainly confess to the being wicked enough to have been deemed a tolerable Methodist. I had then quitted the old playhouse in Lowgate for a new one in Finkle-street. That the principal performers of conventicles love to follow the smell of a theatre is evident, by their particularly consecrating those unhallowed shops, and thinking them enviable situations to practise their own love-feasts in—— “Put out the light, and then——” So this Rev. Mr. Rutherford, formerly a London coachman, erected his pulpit on the spot where Brutus had been in *his* pulpit also:—the pit he converted into pews, and the stage and side boxes were appropriated for the beaux and belles.——Here follows (most truly copied) his letter to me, caused partly by the brass rims not being come from York to Hull; for he told me over a bottle, to which he had no aversion, that he wanted a collection to purchase candlesticks, and I having left off using those brass rims, (when Mr. Garrick changed the mode of lighting the stage with six branches that used formerly to be let down at the end of every act, which required a nimble-fingered candle-snuffer) I promised my reverend father the Methodist I would light his tabernacle, aye, and performed it too.

To TATE WILKINSON, *Esq.*

“DEAR SIR,

“AS your engagements in public and mine run counter, I did not know when to wait on you as

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“to

“ to a proper season ; and therefore as you were
 “ so good and sympathizing to act from such a
 “ noble spirit of humanity to the distressed as
 “ proposing to take a pew in my chapel in Low-
 “ gate, I shall leave these four best pews to the
 “ generosity of the persons that engage ; so who-
 “ ever leads the way will be a pattern for the
 “ others. I verily think, without the least flat-
 “ tery, that your encouragement of such things
 “ will be such an honour to the stage, and bespeak
 “ the same to the comedians, as will perpetuate
 “ your name more than Alexander the Great’s.
 “ I shall be glad to know what place you fix
 “ on, and when I shall wait on you, and whether
 “ the *candlesticks are come*. May Heaven load you
 “ with all kind of blessings for time and an un-
 “ seen world.

“ From your humble and

“ Much obliged servant,

“ ROB. RUTHERFORD.”

Hull, Jan. 10, 1771.

At times I have heard good discourses from Mr.
 Whitfield, delivered with energy, feeling, and
 pathos, but then he had been really and truly an
 actor on the stage in the early part of his life ; and
 as he liked tragedy, and found that a pair of squint-
 ing eyes (as may be seen by his print) did not
 move the young ladies tender hearts, but pro-
 duced laughter instead of tears, he d——d the
 stage, and ever after stuck to that text ; but he
 often melted and squeezed to some purpose many
 a rich dowager, who felt the power of his feelings
 from their mutual sympathy. The low Ruff of the

the preachers in general is not worth repeating ; but to shew I have not often attended without sometimes being a good boy, I will begin with the second best performer in that line I ever saw, and give his harangue verbatim ; and tho' but frothy stuff, it is much better, and more like reason than the damnation so terribly thundered out, too often in stage invective ; so much so, that were they not hardened by the familiarity of their fire, brimstone, and pitchforks, if it thundered I should fear less if in a playhouse than in the tabernacle, particularly if near the preacher.

Mr. Wesley about four years ago, in the fields at Leeds, for want of room for his congregation in his tabernacle, gave an account of himself by informing us, That when he was at college he was particularly fond of the devil's pops (or cards) ; and said, that every Saturday he was one of a constant party at Whist, not only for the afternoon, but also for the evening ; he then mentioned the names of several respectable gentlemen who were with him at college.—“ But,” continued he, “ the latter part of my time there I became acquainted with the Lord, I used to hold communication with him. On my first acquaintance,” said Wesley, “ I used to talk with the Lord once a week, then every day, from that to twice a day, till at last the intimacy so increased, that He appointed a meeting once in every four hours.” He recollected, he said, the last Saturday he ever played at cards, that the rubber at Whist was longer than he expected ; and on observing the tediousness of the game, he pulled out his watch, when

to his shame he found it was some minutes past eight, which was beyond the time he had appointed to meet the Lord:—He thought the devil had certainly tempted him to stay beyond his hour, he therefore suddenly gave his cards to a gentleman near him to finish the game, and went to the place appointed, beseeching forgiveness for his crime, and resolved never to play with the devil's pops again. That resolution he had never broken; and what was more extraordinary, that his brother and sister, though distant from Cambridge, experienced signs of grace on that same day, on that same hour, in the month of October. After the easy acquaintance he had made, the idea of which I think too solemn to declare and mention in the familiar manner those self-elected people do; what must have become of all the tribes before us for the last seventeen hundred years but damnation? How unfortunate that Methodism did not start up through a trap-door many centuries ago! What a hypocritical led-by-the-nose world it would then have been!

Mr. Wesley, after expatiating on the devil's pops, said, "Now, my dear friends! if you think there is no harm follows from playing at cards, why play at cards:—If you think, my dear brethren, there is no harm in hunting a poor little hare and depriving it of life, why you may go a-hunting without being guilty of sin:—I do not say you will be d——d for that, provided in your conscience you do not think you are doing wrong.—If you think there is no harm in playing with the devil's books, or going to an assembly, where you

you shall stay till two or three o'clock in the morning, and where they dance belly to belly and back to back, and put themselves in the most unseemly postures—why, if you think there is no harm in going to that assembly, you may go. I am told," continued Wesley, "you have a wicked play-house in Leeds—I do not say you will be d—d for going to see a play, if you think there is no harm in seeing a play. But now, my dear brethren, let me call you to a recollection of these trifling matters: Though you have heard me repeat that I do not pronounce damnation on my hearers for playing with the devil's pops, or for killing a harmless hare and depriving it of life—though I have not said the devil is with spreading arms expecting to receive you, but that you may go to an assembly, or even to the devil's house, without damnation; yet, my dear brethren, if instead of the devil's pops, the going a hunting, or to the dancing assembly, or to see a play, you can, like me, get acquainted and enter into conversation and intimacy with the Lord, who will talk, who will hold converse with you here on earth—how can you prefer such vanities of this foolish world to real bliss in this and the world to come?"——Here ends Mr. Wesley.

The Rev. Mr. Whitfield (the first actor in the Methodist walk) was of a contrary cast entirely, and not without humour here and there. His dialect was very particular—*Lurd* instead of Lord, *Gud* instead of God—as, *O Lurd Gud!*

I remember a text of his was—*May we all work the harder.*—"There was a poor woman, and she was a long time before she was converted: she was three-score years and ten—yes she was;—she was three-score years and ten:—" Sir, (says she to the good man that converted her) Sir, (says she) I am three-score years and ten, I have been a long time about it: but Sir, (says she) I will work the harder;—yes, Sir, (says she) I will work the harder!" And O! may you all like that dear good woman "*work the harder.*" Then followed a groan of applause; for he had, like Mr. Bayes, a selected number in his pit that understood their cues, and was sure to applaud, and the rest of the house followed of course. Then Whitfield, looking round the rails of his little desk below—"What, you young ones! why you are some of you twelve, some fourteen, and some sixteen years of age, yet you do not think of going to hell? What!" exclaimed Whitfield, "twelve and fourteen years of age, and not thinking of going to hell! O ye little brats you!"---and at that instant the old woman groaned, and, like fell Charybdis, murmured hoarse applause; and Whitfield shook his head, and growled in his white wig, exactly like my performance of Squintum, as I actually practised it from the serious comical discourse I am now relating. Whitfield then proceeded thus---"You go to plays! and what do you see there! Why, if you will not tell me, I will tell you what you see there!--When you see the players on the stage, you see the devil's children grinning at you; and when you go to the playhouse, I suppose you go in ruffles—I wonder

wonder whether St. Paul wore ruffles? No; there were no ruffles in those days." "I am told," continued he archly, "that people say I bawl—well I allow it, I do bawl, and I will bawl—I will not be a velvet-mouthed preacher, I will not speak the word of *God* in a sleepy manner, like your church preachers—I'll tell you a story.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1675, was acquainted with Mr. Betterton the player. One day the Archbishop of Canterbury said to Betterton the player, "Pray inform me Mr. Betterton, what is the reason you actors on the stage can affect your congregations with speaking of things imaginary, as if they were real, while we in the church speak of things real, which our congregations only receive as if they were imaginary?" "Why, my Lord, (says Betterton the player) the reason is very plain—we actors on the stage, speak of things imaginary, as if they were real, and you in the pulpit speak of things real, as if they were imaginary." "Therefore," added Whitfield, "I will bawl, I will not be a velvet-mouthed preacher."

I leave the reader to judge on the good reasoning of Methodism. I cannot help noticing for the honour of the stage, that Mr. Whitfield could not have betrayed himself into a better story for its credit—(his pointing out an intimacy between the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Betterton): And for the actor, he could not have given a more substantial and revered authority. And what a joke for Mr. Whitfield

to pronounce damnation on players, when he certainly avowed in his own opinion, that Mr. Betterton was, what all the world ever acknowledged him to be, a scholar and gentleman of honour; and Mr. Whitfield gave the players reasoning and exemplification, for his own mode of preaching. But hypocrisy, like the cloven foot, will sometimes be espied.

Some of the wild preachers of this kind, often remind me of Antonio in the Merchant of Venice——

Mark you this Bassanio!
 The devil can cite scripture for his purpose;
 An evil soul, producing holy witness,
 Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
 A goodly apple, rotten at the heart.
 O! what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Bell's edition bears this note on these lines. "A most excellent remark this; for daily experience proves, that some of the worst characters breathing, seek shelter under scriptural texts; by the misapplication or misconstruction of which, also, opposite sects uncharitably consign each other to eternal punishment."

As a striking instance of good-will, charity, and mildness, being prevalent in the minds of Methodists, I insert the following paragraph from Mr. Bowling's Leeds paper——

"At York Assizes, William Richards, for
 "robbing the Theatre-Royal, was ordered to be
 "transported for seven years; and on the West-
 "ern Circuit, a man was convicted of robbing
 "a Methodist Chapel, and sentenced to one
 "year's

"year's imprisonment. Thus, in the eye of the
 "law, a *House of Prayer* is just one seventh the
 "value of a *Den of Thieves*."

LEEDS MERCURY, 1790.

But now for my tabernacle at Covent-Garden, where myself and Mr. Rich were lately casting the comedy of the Minor, and which was the occasion of my preaching. Mr. Rich and I were on such sudden terms of violent friendship, that he insisted I should cast the parts. I put down the Minor, Mr. Dyer;—Richard Wealthy, Mr. Sparks, &c. &c. &c.

The morning after, a note came from Mr. Sparks for Mr. Rich, to the following purport: "Mr. Sparks's compliments to Mr. Rich, he is concerned at being obliged to return the part of Richard Wealthy; but as he is given to understand Mr. Wilkinson is engaged, and is to sustain the principal characters in the comedy, Mr. Sparks cannot consent by any means to perform or assist in any piece, for the advantage of a villain, who unprovoked has endeavoured to hurt him in his peace of mind, and injure his reputation, as an actor, with the public."—When Mr. Rich gave me the note to read, it perplexed me much; but I immediately adverted to my very disagreeable situation when at Drury-Lane, and that I had given up every idea of offending the actors of Covent-Garden: that by the artifice of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Foote I was forced on the stage at Drury-Lane, in 1758, against my own consent: and requested Mr. Rich further to observe, that when my own benefits happened at Drury-Lane, in 1758 and 1759, not any actor

whatever had been offended by any imitations or mimicry from me; that my sole aim was levelled at Mr. Foote, for the ill-treatment I had received from him: and as a stronger proof, I referred to my conduct in Dublin the winter before, where I had not created a single enemy by such behaviour, nor at my benefit the spring before at Drury-Lane; or offered any entertainment of the kind, either from the desire of my friends, the public, or even to assist my own emolument on my late benefits in London, which it certainly must be acknowledged it would have done, and much to my advantage; but I readily lessened my own profits rather than incur enmity: I had in consequence of that consideration hoped, that I had cleared myself from all intentional injury to Mr. Sparks or other gentlemen. This fully proved to my own mind, for once in my life, the good policy of having laid by imitative talents, (Mr. Foote excepted) all that time: for had I kept publicly practising those shining qualities, as I judged them, and though I was then certainly in great estimation (while under the trammels of Mr. Foote and Mr. Garrick); yet had I at the latter part of my time with him made too free with my brethren of the theatres, very likely I should not have stood any chance of rising again in London hastily, or have been ever received at Covent-Garden theatre. Indeed I might have subsisted on Mr. Garrick's flaps of the shoulders of mutton, but, like poor Jerry Sneak, not have got a bit of the brown. My reasons to Mr. Rich worked as palliatives in my behalf, and had much weight with him. He
sent

sent for Sparks, and in his manner related to him what *Mr. Williamskin* had said: Sparks in a short time was cool and pacified, and said, On the whole it appeared perfectly clear that the young man was not so much to blame as he had supposed: that it was apparent Wilkinson had not received any reward or gratuity for what he had done, from either of his masters Foote or Garrick; but on the contrary they had been guilty of meanness and ingratitude: And Sparks concluded with not only his declared acceptance of the part, but offered every assistance to the rehearsals to aid and bring the *Minor* forward: for its being levelled as a stroke at Foote, tickled Sparks, as gratifying his ancient grudge. Though Mr. Foote's acquaintance was universal, yet as all knew he spared neither friend nor foe, there could not be the least reason to apprehend a shadow of resentment from the audience by any attack of mimicry played on Mr. Foote himself from any opponent, as Mr. Foote attacked every body, and, like *Drawcanfir*, might have said to his friends—

I huff, I bluff, I strut, look big, and stare,
And this I do because—I dare, I dare!

A most intimate friend of Mr. Foote's wrote to me the following lines, on my being displeased, and is a strong likeness.—

“Mr. Wilkinson you should have known him better long before this time of day; then you would have looked upon him as a peculiar man, with such gifts of originality relative to men, manners,

manners, and places—whether he is in general right or wrong, I will not pretend to say; but I will give you this as my own opinion, that if he is wrong, it is difficult to dispute with him; and when he is right, it is impossible to answer him.”

Peace being settled, and myself one of the Covent-Garden company, Foote soon got intelligence from spies in our royal camp, of what was going forward: he was much enraged, and not having forgiven my freedoms with him at Dublin the winter before, he thought I pursued him like his evil spirit. And one morning when I was sitting at the grand levee at Mr. Rich's, with my new friend Sparks in council of war, we were alarmed with a thundering rat-tat and ringing of the bell also, when a servant announced Mr. Foote was come to wait on Mr. Rich; and instead of being ushered into the grand saloon, he had been shewn into the parlour.

Mr. Rich went down to Mr. *Footseye*, as he called him, but the visit was not accompanied by a calm, for it was most violent, blustering, and boisterous. Mr. Foote furiously exclaimed—
“Damn it, you old hound! if you dare let Wilkinson, that pug nosed son of a b—h, take any liberty with me as to mimicry, I will bring you yourself, Rich, on the stage! If you want to engage that pug, black his face, and let him hand the tea-kettle in a pantomime; for damn the fellow, he's as ignorant as a whore's maid! And if he dares to appear in my characters, in the Minor, I will,” said Foote, “instantly produce your old stupid ridiculous self,
with

with your three cats, and your hound of a mimic altogether, next week at Drury-Lane, for the general diversion of the pit, boxes, and galleries; and that will be paying you, you squinting old Hecate, too great a compliment!" And after a few sarcasms Foote hastily departed, denouncing vengeance on him and his cats, and immediately Mr. Rich appeared with a most woeful countenance, and said, why *Mustfer Sparkish*, *Mustfer Footseye* has been here, and he says if I let *Mustfer Williamskin* act his parts on the stage, *Mustfer Sparkish*, he will write parts for me, my cats, and *Mustfer Williamskin*, and bring us all upon the stage; so we must not act what we intended."

"Why surely, Sir," said Sparks, "you cannot be so weak as to let Mr. Foote's vapouring visit frighten you from your purpose, or intimidate you from having a piece acted that may be of service to your theatre, and to the young gentleman. Is it not truly strange and laughable, that Mr. Foote, of all people, should confess himself galled, and exert his wit against mimicry—he who has been for years an universal torturer and spoiler of private peace, from the licentious liberties he has taken? Now, Mr. Rich," added Sparks, "let me interest myself in this matter, I augur success; therefore let us of Covent-Garden theatre, immediately rally our forces, take the field, let slip the dogs of war, and act the Minor in defiance of his own guards at Drury-Lane." Rich agreed, seemed pleased—but he was still frightened of Foote, and I believe, dreaded an affront on his favourite cat more than on himself; all was settled to have the performance

performance brought forward as soon as possible: for, as Sparks observed,—“*advantage fed them fat while we delayed.*” Indeed the Minor was ready at Drury-Lane, and they meant not to lose time; for Foote entertained not the least doubt of victory.

We, from various obstacles, could not get it decently on the stage in less than a fortnight, as other pieces were preparing, such as Mr. Macklin's new comedy of the Married Libertine; his Love-a-la-Mode; and Mr. Beard and Miss Brent, were rehearsing Dr. Arne's new opera of Thomas and Sally; which all considered, made it seem difficult to get our Minor produced. And on the end of the week that this matter had been settled, it was advertised on the Thursday from Drury-Lane, and on the Saturday was pasted on every wall—The MINOR; and that favourite little comedy had been all the week puffed and paragraphed in every newspaper by Mr. Foote. But unforeseen events sometimes do and undo what our utmost wisdom and wishes cannot, as here was an extraordinary instance; for the bills were but a few hours exhibited to public view, when it so happened they were as hastily plucked down as they had been vigilantly put up; it was on Saturday the 25th of October, 1760, when the sudden death of our truly beloved and lamented monarch King George II. occasioned, for three weeks, a suspension of theatrical hostilities and diversions of all kinds in the great city of London. And I seriously wish (abstracted from self) some alleviation could be considered for a truly loyal set of people, the actors, on such a melancholy occasion:

occasion : For though it is undeniable that every attention and grateful demeanour should be indispensably observed on such an awful stroke, and that a hoity toity following of diversions would be highly improper, and that every duty to such solemnity is due, yet it certainly falls cruelly on the poor player : I reverence and love my king, my prince, and my country, as the most faithful subject in his majesty's dominions ; yet at such really mournful times, the poor player, in a middling class, who *struts his life upon the stage*, is certainly destitute of daily bread, becomes distressed, and absolutely reduced to being a charity-dependent, where the weekly stipend had been merely an existence ; and too likely, if encumbered with a family, plunged into debt and future misery. It may easily be credited that whenever such a calamity happens, (and which in the course of nature must happen) many are not in possession of a shilling ; it is even a hardship to those who possess œconomy, which some actors and actresses, to their great credit and good sense do, as Mr. Robertson, formerly of the York company, is an instance, and an honour as a man and actor to mention, and several others whose incomes have been very confined.

Now, as a good subject, my stock was truly great on the sudden surprise and loss of my monarch, whose name I had prattled from childhood—

Monarchs,

Monarchs, sages, peasants must
Follow thee and come to dust.

My own situation at that time did not suffer, as thank God, I possessed every needful requisite then to render life happy and every way agreeable, so the theatre being closed for a few weeks was not any inconvenience to my particular self; but the poor actor at such a time must be rejoiced if the landlord is in good humour, and will chalk up instead of receiving cash; but then the day of retribution must and will appear in black and white—

Thus comes the reck'ning when the banquet's o'er.

It so happened and came to pass, during that serious vacation, that the Minor was brought to maturity at Covent-Garden theatre; and what is more extraordinary, by the indefatigable attention and eagerness of Mr. Sparks—

Once my mortal foe.

When Drury-Lane again opened, the first Saturday they published the Minor, with Mr. Foote, &c. I posted myself in the gallery. Mr. Foote was received, as usual, with great eclat, by a most brilliant and crowded audience; that comedy being in as much vogue then, or more so, than any favourite piece at the present day of 1790, (the run and rage of the School for Scandal, and Duenna, being now over.)—When the comedy was finished

finished I hastened to Covent-Garden, and urged Mr. Rich to produce the Minor as soon as possible; when Mr. Dyer (who was to act the part of Sir George, and who was the particular intimate of Sparks) judged it a political stroke to give out that piece for the Monday following; and though the play before intended had been given out, we prevailed on Mr. Rich, and the Minor was announced, as by particular desire, for the Monday: Mr. Foote's characters of Shift, Smirk, Mrs. Cole, and the Epilogue, by Mr. Wilkinson. It was not only honoured with an overflowing theatre, but had a very great reception, and it had a considerable run; and in that puff I had the advantage, for Mr. Rich's new matters were not ready for representation, therefore I was the more wanted.—Mr. Foote shared the profits of his night's performance; for that reason, therefore, if Garrick had any thing strong to advertise, or wished to play himself, Mr. Foote was obliged to give way. On the second night of my performance, Mr. Rich at the end of the Minor brought an article for me to sign, accompanied by Mr. Wood, his son-in-law, an attorney; the purport was, one hundred guineas for playing till the first of January, and a benefit when I chose to appoint it. It was a very genteel offer, as my benefit considered, made it of real consequence to me, and of course the proposal was by me accepted, signed, and sealed. On the first night, in the performance of Shift, I broke loose into my imitative qualities, which I had not practised (as to actors) in London for two years.

Mossop

Mossop had but the year before gone to Ireland; he was very peculiar, very popular, and well recollected: I was very like him indeed, and was obliged to repeat his speeches of Zaphimri in the Orphan of China.

To prove what odd mortals we are as to our love and our hate, Sparks, who I related as formerly to have been my professed enemy, was now turned to the other extreme, and was my hearty well-wisher. On my leaving the stage as Shift, he took me fast by the hand and wished me joy, and burst out into a violent fit of laughing:—Says I, “Mr. Sparks, what are you laughing at?” “Why,” replied he, “I am laughing at myself, Sir: for two years ago I was bloody angry at you for the carrying me into company where I was not; yet your imitation of Mossop was so strong, that I was irresistibly pleased whether I would or no: so I am laughing at my own absurdity.” Those imitations having been bottled up by me so long had then double the effect, and made Shift a star in the Minor.—My introduction in the character of Foote was truly Foote from top to toe; and as to Mr. Garrick I made no scruple, though I had him before me, as his curiosity had led him to see me, not expecting that I would take him off, or he would not have been so publicly surrounded, but have carefully avoided such a queer situation. My imitations were never told either in bill or newspaper who they were designed for; but whenever I was particularly lucky, the audience would repeat the name, as Sparks! Sparks! Barry! Barry! Nor was I a little pleased when repeating from Macbeth, “Who can be wise, amazed,
&c.”

&c." I heard the audience echo from one to the other, "O Garrick! Garrick!"—O thought I, my master, this is my day of triumph!—and from that night he never forgave or forgot his being so surrounded in the front box, nor did he ever speak to me again to the day of his death.

My Whitfield was beyond compare; his manner was then universally known.—Mr. Foote was struck by stepping in by chance, and once hearing Whitfield; the mixture of whose absurdity, whim, consequence, and extravagance, pleased his fancy and entertained him highly, as Whitfield that day was dealing out damnation, fire, and brimstone as cheerfully as if they were so many blessings. What pity it is that our fears only, and not our reason, will bring conviction; but reason, handled by unaffected pure piety and religion, would be a day of woe to Methodism, and lessen their audiences in many tabernacles, where they are certain to lament preaching to nobody, though at the same time wedged to the outer doors, and on the Sunday exclaiming at the full crowded theatres, which have probably been almost deserted. But Mr. Foote was only a spy at Whitfield's academy, while I had been a zealot for some seasons before my encounter at Covent Garden with Mr. Foote. My attendance had been constant with my friend Shuter, and as he actually was one of the new-born, and paid large sums to Whitfield, I was always permitted to stay with him, for he really was bewildered in his brain, more by wishing to acquire imaginary grace than by all his drinking: and whenever he
was

was warm with the bottle, and with only a friend or two, like Maw-worm he could not mind his shop because he thought it a sin, and wished to go a preaching; for Shuter, like Maw-worm, believed he had had a call. I have gone with Shuter at six in the morning of a Sunday to Tottenham-Court-Road, then before ten to Mr. Wesley's in Long-Acre, at eleven again to Tottenham-Court-Road tabernacle, dined near Bedlam in Moorfields (a very proper place for us both) with a party of the Holy Ones, went at three to Mr. Wesley's theatre there, (the tabernacle I mean) from that to Whitfield's in Moorfields till eight, and then shut up to commune with the family-compact. Now with all this practice and attention, and with my natural talents, I must have been a blockhead indeed not to have gleaned some good things; (and doubtless Mr. Whitfield was at times a good preacher, and truly excellent.) I therefore really exhibited and obtained a much stronger likeness as Dr. Squintum than Mr. Foote did. The week before my Covent-Garden exhibition I met my friend Shuter at the tabernacle; a great coolness had continued for some time, as we had not spoke to, or even looked at each other since the breach between us in the year 1758; but as we were met together in a place of charity and forgiveness to all who subscribed to the dictator, we became very sociable, and before the conclusion of Whitfield's lecture were perfectly reconciled: We adjourned to the Rose, and by three the next morning were sworn friends, and continued so till death called him away.—Indeed he was above eleven years older than me, and would

would have been sixty-three had he lived to this time. Ned Shuter was a lively, spirited, shrewd companion; superior natural whim and humour surely never inhabited a human breast, for what he said and did was all his own, as it was with difficulty he could read the parts he had to play, and could not write at all; he had attained to sign an order, but no more: Nature could not have bestowed her gifts to greater advantage than on poor Ned, as what she gave he made shine, not only conspicuously but brilliantly, and that to the delight of all who knew him on or off the stage—he might be truly dubbed “The Child of Nature:”—He was no man’s enemy but his own. Peace, rest, and happiness, I hope he now possesses—for the poor, the friendless, and the stranger he often comforted; and when sometimes reduced by his follies, he never could see a real object in misery and resist giving at least half he was worth to his distressed fellow-creature.

My popularity that year of the Minor was such, that my acquaintance I might truly term universal. My benefit was the week before Christmas, and was not only crowded, but honourably attended, which put my finances into a most respectable accumulation, though my free living from place to place was very expensive, and indeed extravagant:—Yet the reader is to observe my benefits in general were all free from any charges, and were what we on the stage term *clear benefits*; and my night being numerously attended in the middle of a winter season in such a metropolis

a metropolis as London cannot be judged a phenomenon.

That season at Covent-Garden theatre, the day after acting the character of Mr. Foote in the introduction to the Minor, I received an anonymous letter, and recollected the same sentiments had been conveyed to me in the like manner three seasons before after my benefit-night at Drury-Lane, on taking off Mr. Foote as himself, not as an actor on the stage. The contents were nearly as follows:—

To Mr. WILKINSON.

“ SIR,

“ THOUGH your imitation of Mr. Foote last night was certainly great, yet your twich-
“ ing your chin with tweezers was very wrong,
“ though well conceived, but on the stage
“ it was a blemish, and not any advantage to
“ your imitation; for you should consider the
“ audience are only judges of Mr. Foote’s public
“ stage performance, and not of how he acts or
“ speaks when in his own house, and with
“ his acquaintance and particular intimates:—
“ therefore omit those peculiarities of Mr.
“ Foote’s, and you will not lose, but increase
“ your reputation with the town, and the good
“ opinion of

“ SIR,

“ Your well-wisher,

“ A. Z.”

These

These two notes I often considered, as the remark was so just, (though I had not paid obedience to the first) and made me guess from that time to the present that they proceeded from the secret good wishes and knowledge of Mr. Murphy, who was often on parties at Mr. Foote's, and knew what I meant when the public did not:—Whether it was to him I was obliged or no he best can tell; if he did, it may have escaped his memory, and he may not recollect so trivial a circumstance, as it did not relate to himself. Why I take the wisdom to myself of thinking the letters came from Mr. Murphy (who had behaved very kindly to me) is, that in 1759, on my benefit night at Drury-Lane, as I was acting the character of Mr. Foote, he (Mr. Murphy) was sitting in the orchestra; and as I grew elated with applause, and feeling to myself that all I did was right, I too often made use of a particular word, which Mr. Foote thoughtlessly, and from custom, often repeated laughingly in his own room in common conversation; it was a word foolish and indelicate, and by no means fit to be presumptuously or ignorantly mentioned in a public theatre; and I had never thought as to the meaning, but was, I declare, most perfectly innocent of it; and from my rapidity of speech the audience (luckily indeed for me) did not attend to it any more than myself:—And as Mr. Sheridan's Puff in the Critic says, "The players never know when to have done with a good thing," so did I often repeat this unfit word before a most respectable audience. I saw Mr. Murphy in the orchestra enjoying my performance

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performance and applauding, which gave me double vigour; when on a sudden he started up, and I lost, from the situation full before me, him whom I had seen in such high humour, therefore I feared something was very wrong, but what I could not divine;—but I do suppose, what *I said* so repeatedly had frightened him from his pleasant seat:—Luckily for me the loud laughter and applause drowned the senses, or I might have seen more decampments, or myself have been ordered so to do: and I am certain, had I been at that time disgraced I should not have known for why. But all went off to my excess of joy; and when I saw Mr. Murphy some days after, he kindly explained what had drove him from his place, as he declared he trembled for me, and gave me at the same time proper information sufficient to rectify my error and improve my breeding, without need of Johnson's Dictionary for further knowledge. This is a lesson for all imitations to be confined entirely to the modes and manners only with which the audience are acquainted; for the private manners in life of Mr. Garrick, or Mr. Anybody, they are neither familiarized to, nor in the least acquainted with, therefore foolish to add, by way of garnish; as what might please in a private circle with information, will naturally lessen the merit of the mimicry or satire, instead of increasing it with the public; and indeed it must be allowed as unmannerly as mean, and on no account worthy forgiveness, were it tolerated, to rehearse private foibles, manners, and conversation, on a public stage.

My

My friendly reader, I fear will be apt to shrink, and think I have been too liberal in praising and loading myself with encomiums relative to my applause and reputation in London in 1760, as a rival in point of mimicry, in the public estimation, when opposed to Mr. Foote; but I really aver and believe I have not exceeded the strict bounds of truth. As to the exactitude of time and place I am persuaded this olio will stand foremost of almost any produced; self is generally partial, and I am obliged to be the herald of my own praises: for Shakspeare says, "*If a man will not erect his own tomb-stone ere he dies, his memory shall live no longer than his knell rings, and his widow weeps. — How long is that? An hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum. And so much for praising myself, who I myself will bear witness am praise-worthy.*" — Indeed I can mention several persons still living who can attest every particular, I am sorry to say not so many as I could wish, as most of my sincere friends and benefactors are now no more.

As a true imitator I stood before Mr. Foote in the public eye; for though he drew characters strongly, yet his manners in point of likeness were not strictly just; besides my partial friends of that time, who cannot now come when they are called, and, for all I know, may now be spirits in the *vasty deep*, yet as theatrical and honourable vouchers I refer to Mr. Macklin and Mr. Murphy, who will not, I trust, deny they often told me I was in some particular imitations incomparable, and I was too well bred then and now to contradict their favourable opinions, but

verily think they were good judges, and spoke only the truth. Mr. Macklin has often acted by me as a particular kind friend, and to him I am in debt for many obligations of tender regard paid to my juvenile years, and since; and as I never made him any equal return, confess myself his obliged and grateful debtor. Mr. Murphy I have not the satisfaction or pleasure to call an intimate, or even common acquaintance; my frequent laughs with him at that distant juncture of time were chiefly occasioned by my often meeting him on parties at Mr. Foote's and at the New Exchange coffee-house; but Mr. Macklin and I have often met in Dublin, sometimes in the same theatre, sometimes in our different ships of war; and meet him where I would, I cannot but remember civilities, not only to me, but to any friend I took in my hand to introduce to him.

With a full purse, a stock of health, and plenty of good friends, my Covent-Garden engagement ended; after which I soiled till Passion-Week drew near—A week that occasions the players never to forget it is a religious one, though their superiors may not have the same feeling occasion to rub up their memories: but every player and playeress can recollect that week without a prompter.

Mr. Garrick, as I before observed, continued obdurate; but thank God I neither wanted his forgiveness nor his favours as a manager.

Early in March I was favoured with a letter from my good friend Mrs. Strode at Portsmouth, informing me, that a world of people were ex-
pected

pected there, as a grand expedition was preparing against the French, and the number of officers and subalterns both of army and navy would be incredible just before Easter: that there were no plays going forward, nor any diversions whatever; and if I could but hit on any entertainment, it would turn out lucrative to me, and be received as a compliment to the town, and all my friends and acquaintance. I made proper inquiries on receiving this pleasing intelligence, and heard every thing Mrs. Strode had mentioned in a manner so friendly soon confirmed. Now the love of money, added to the allurements of wandering, seemed to me irresistible; I knew nothing could be done there in Passion-Week, though I might prepare for the ensuing holidays, but did not conceive how to manage and contrive without an able assistant. Mrs. Strode, at my request, procured the theatre against my arrival; but one auxiliary at least became indispensably necessary.—I mentioned the matter to my laughing whimsical friend Joseph Austin, who liked a frolic as well as myself; I therefore did not hesitate a moment as to whom I should impart my perplexity: To him I related my new-fangled scheme and want of assistance, also laid before him the glaring temptations of army-officers, &c. and proposed terms of agreement. Without a pause our wise heads settled it immediately; and that we might be more sure of attractive merit, Joseph clapped in his lady as a third performer (a very pretty woman) into the chaise, and on Palm Sunday we sat down to supper at Portsmouth: We found the playhouse as the company of comedians had left it, a mere

wreck: They had torn away all traces of its former self—all little ornaments of what it ought to have been—having removed all the wings and ragged scenery for their more remote theatres, with Juliet's tomb and balcony, even Desdemona's bed

Had been seized by the hands of filthy dungeon villains,
And thrown amongst the common lumber.

And conveyed in their baggage-cart at Portsmouth to their fortrefs at Plymouth, themselves having a long and heavy winter march: and indeed I fear the greatest part of that theatrical army were obliged on the expedition to use their legs instead of carriages to obtain safe footing at their distant Devonshire encampment; which proves the truth of the old proverb—*One half the world knows not how the other half live.*

My friend Joseph and I had a most whimsical entertaining week; I am sure he never can forget it, as it consisted of oddity and many freakish occurrences. From ten till two at noon we were busily employed with plastering paper on laths for our wings, and filling up the back part of the stage with something like what we term a flat scene; indeed we had a carpenter, but Joseph and Tate were the principal workmen. Before the week was expired our playhouse was prepared for the receiving a most splendid audience, with which we were honoured; even our stage was crowded and produced the best back flat scene I ever saw, which well paid us for our industry. We were not only gratified with the great house being lu-
crative

crative and fashionable, but we were still more flattered and pleased by a desire of a second night, and with the assurance of good support; for my own part I had been so fettered and confined while articted by Mr. Garrick, that I was rejoiced at being what I liked to be, and ever will be if I can, *FREE as air*; that by choice shall ever be my motto; therefore the second night was palatable and quite agreeable to me. But here a difficulty arose: I had engaged to perform for my friend Shuter's benefit on Thursday, March 26, and that promise, without breach of word, honour, or friendship, was easy and practicable, as time would just allow it, and not any to spare; but my trepanned friend Joseph, on this smuggled expedition, was likely to be tried for offences at the grand court of Drury by Judge Garrick, a severe judge, who would demand his bond, as Joseph had actually engaged to play the Wednesday night, March 25, a new part wrote by Mrs. Clive for her own benefit; who at writing was (as may with justice be equally said of myself) *a dead good one*. However he was very happy, and temptation lay before him:—So fell Adam—So fell Joseph, though he has not the least relationship to Joseph the Bashful:—Notwithstanding his perilous situation he yielded to entreaty, though he foresaw and dreaded the inevitable storm. We performed much the same kind of jumbled incoherent entertainment as we had done on the first night. We had a full house on the Tuesday, and soon after supper that night my friend Joseph Austin set off with his lady for London, and left me behind to settle all bills, &c. for our private and public

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public expenditure. My friend got to London in a whole skin, but too late for his part; and indeed he had been so laden the week before with state affairs upon his head and shoulders, that had he been there a day sooner I do not suppose he had studied sufficiently to have known a sentence.—The lamentable consequence to Mrs. Bayes (or rather Dame Clive) was her being obliged to submit to change her new farce, or have an apology made for the part to be read—which I understood was kindly undertaken by Mr. Packer, but am not certain. However the piece was unfortunately d—d, and the dreadful doom of it she attributed entirely to the neglective and audacious behaviour of that impudent Austin; it enraged that truly comical lady (on the stage only) to the highest pitch of fury; not Ceres with her torch set the fields of corn on fire with more eager fantastic fury than she would have at that instant sacrificed even the high-priest of the synagogue, Garrick himself, could she have dragged him to her altar of revenge; but “such divinity surrounds a king” that he escaped her vengeance by a secure and speedy retreat; and if truth may be spoken, I am inclined to think on this matter he was more indebted to flight than his divinityship for safety: as be it known, though our monarch Garrick used to be lordly and managerial over great and small, yet Dame Clive (like the Welch) was never subdued—indeed the great little man dreaded her. As an instance—I remember one night, while I had the honour to appertain to Drury-Lane theatre, Lethe was to be acted by desire of several persons of distinction: The bill

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run thus: *A dramatic satire called Lethe*—The new character of Lord Chalkstone by Mr. Garrick; and not any other performers mentioned, not even Woodward's or Yates's—Mrs. Clive's part was the Fine Lady.—There were several actors of merit in the piece, but whether it had been printed in that manner by design or accident I know not, as play-bills published daily must be liable to errors, even though Mr. Kemble was the manager. Madam Clive at noon came to the theatre and furiously rung the alarm bell: for her name being omitted was an offence she construed so heinous, that nothing but vengeance, and blood! blood! Iago was the word! and it was no more strange than true that Garrick ever feared to meet that female spirit. Perhaps Mr. Cross the prompter might think Garrick's name was all-sufficient; but her not seeing in the bill "The Fine Lady by Mrs. Clive," was so unpardonable an offence, that could she have got near him, and he had been severe in his replies, I dare say she would have deranged King David's wig and dress as adorned for Lord Chalkstone, which would have disconcerted him much. Mrs. Clive was a mixture of combustibles—she was passionate, cross, vulgar, yet sensible, and a very generous woman, and as a comic actress, of genuine worth—*indeed, indeed, she was a diamond of the first water.*—When her scene of the Fine Lady came on, she was received with the usual expression of gladness on her approach, as so charming an actress truly deserved; and her song from the Italian Opera, where she was free with a good ridiculous imitation of Signora Mingotti, who was the darling favourite

favourite at the King's Theatre, and admired by all the *amateurs*,—she was universally encored, and came off the stage much sweetened in temper and manners from her first going on.—“Aye,” says she in triumph, “that artful devil could not hurt me with the Town, though he had struck my name out of the bills.” She laughed and joked about her late ill-humour as if she could have kissed all around her, though that happiness was not granted, but was willingly excused; and what added to her applause was her inward joy, triumph, and satisfaction, in finding the little great man was afraid to meet her, and which was of all consolations the greatest; not our brave Rodney could feel more pride or glory on the French Admiral de Grasse delivering up his sword to him, than Madam Clive did in the idea of her subduing Garrick. The valiant Boadicia never hurled her spear with more furor than Clive, that Amazonian Thalestris of Drury-Lane theatre, pursued that great general, Garrick, whenever he offended her; indeed the whole green-room dreaded her frowns. She was the original, and quite at home when in the *Cobler's Wife* in the *Devil to Pay*, and always proved that Poor Nell had a great soul; indeed, to those who approached her door in misery, she supplied their wants, and gave at once without pride or ostentation. Mr. Garrick alluded to Mrs. Clive in *Nell*, and Mrs. Pritchard in the *Queen in Hamlet*, when he wrote and spoke the following lines the season that Barry, Cibber, Quin, and Woffington, united forces at Covent-Garden—

will have no more exotics at the theatre!" and concluded with a determination to discard Austin, for he was at that time really angry and offended with him, and much disapproved of his intimacy with me, as his jealous fearful temper suggested Austin (who was in full confidence with him) might give information now and then of "The forbidden secrets of his prison-house." He at length pacified Clive, convinced her he was not concerned in the plot, and hoped to see Austin afflicted with tortures for what she had suffered that night from his neglect, to which she attributed her favourite offspring being strangled in the birth. Mr. Garrick even soothed her into tolerable temper, by assuring her that her farce was one of the most entertaining and best written pieces that had been produced for years; her own acting had charmed him, and he was mortified to think her misfortune in its disgrace was entirely owing to the unparalleled bad behaviour of Austin. Poor Joe was obliged to face his Master Garrick in a few days, and I believe received from him a very severe lecture, attended (I conjecture) with a smarting fine; he was also for some time banished the court of Drury, and his Majesty of Denmark's presence; but luckily for cunning Joseph Mr. Garrick had interwoven his theatrical schemes and business so much with him, that Garrick found he could not, without inconceivable inconvenience, conduct his multiplicity of affairs without Joseph's transacting the secret services in the cabinet, for Cross was grown old, superannuated, and unfit for his office as prompter, &c.; and on weighing the scales with Austin in

one and his darling Interest with the Rupture in the other, he found the balance was against himself; he therefore with quick and wonted generosity graciously restored Austin to favour at court, and reinstated him in all his honours and moveables of which he had been dispossessed:— For two years he was really a slave to him; nothing was right unless Austin was consulted; and, by way of amends, he would often honour him by publicly walking with him arm in arm, chatting, laughing, &c. with a small bribe for the day, and a large promise for the morrow; and I believe I may pronounce to a certainty, he never in all his life made Mr. Austin a genteel present or recompence for his trouble. I have mentioned this on guess, and if I am wrong in my assertion shall be happy to retract; for I would not advance a falsehood for any advantage whatever, and Mr. Austin can easily in any newspaper contradict what I have asserted, and inform us of Mr. Garrick's generosity. Mr. Austin is an instance of one who some time glowed under the sunshine-beams of court favour; yet with all his dependence on the great man in hopes of independence, he never could obtain his wishes and expectations; for, like the Miser, Joseph wanted to "touch something real," but was only paid (as Rameau) with forgiveness of all that had passed.

At length wearied out, Mr. Austin was under the necessity of leaving his friends and country, and seeking a refuge and asylum in Old Ireland; He never more returned to his old master Garrick.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding Mr. Garrick's oddities, I always did and shall reverence, respect, and esteem him as the greatest actor the British stage has ever known, from its first establishment to the present day: but in other points I have only given the picture as it should be, from the life, with all its spots, blemishes, and beauties; so my conscience may rest: as certainly, if my narrative respecting his treatment of myself be true, there remains no call of any trait of Mr. Garrick from my pen but justice.

In Dublin my old acquaintance Austin and I often met, and since that time as late manager of the Newcastle theatre; but he has retired with ease and plenty—an enviable state! Whenever we do meet and want matter for conversation, we need but recollect Portsmouth, Mr. Garrick, Mrs. Clive, and others—and, as Lady Townly says, “We can make the prettiest sherbet; aye, and without too much lemon:” and to conclude with her ladyship's words (as to Austin and myself) “I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.”

Mr. Garrick, though attached to subordination, was kept in order and decorum himself by our present ingenious writer, Counsellor Murphy; that gentleman could tease his soul, and gall his gizzard whenever he pleased or judged himself wronged. Mr. Macklin my master Garrick did not much love, though formerly they were on a friendly footing, but the Drury palace gates against his irony were fast closed. When *Barbarossa* (wrote by the late Dr. Brown) was produced, Garrick the first night entered after the
fourth

fourth act in a glittering silver-spangled tissue shape; when Mrs. Clive, instead of court adulation, cried out, "O my God! room! room! make room for the royal lamp-lighter!"—which rudeness disconcerted him much for the remaining part of the evening; and certainly it was too free, and not well timed, as he was trembling alive all over on the first night of a new part in a new play; and it certainly is a serious matter in London, and a service of danger.

Before I arrived in town from Portsmouth for Shuter's benefit, Mr. Arthur (manager of the Bath company) came to that town on the plan of building a new theatre there, as the inhabitants much wished for a better and more regular company of performers. Mr. Arthur waited on me, wished me joy on the success of my two nights public *impromptu* at Portsmouth; and as his friends, who had encouraged his new undertaking, wished to see me there again the ensuing summer, he hoped it would turn out mutually agreeable and lucrative to himself and me;—the matter was settled and agreed between us. He then made another proposal for my playing ten nights that spring season at Bath, with a clear benefit—that was also agreed on, and I left Portsmouth and got to London on Wednesday night, March 25, 1760, and on Thursday gave Tea, as I had promised, for my friend Shuter's benefit; and I may with great truth affirm with wonderful applause: The approbation intoxicated me so much, that the night following, being in company with Shuter and Ballard the treasurer, I consented to pour water on the leaves for

for his benefit early in May, though I had engaged for Bath, and knew I was to incur the expence from thence to London and back again; but my desire for applause increased my thirst: it went down so deliciously, that I was glad to cover that as an obligation, which in fact I was pleased to be requested to do, and thought no price I could pay equal to public approbation. I did not then so well know the fickle changes of Fortune as well as life—Would I were young again!—But let it go—A foolish figure! farewell it.

I arrived at Bath well, and without the least fatigue; the next day I paid my respects to Mr. Arthur, also to Mr. Ridout, with a thousand compliments from Mr. Rich, who was unhappy at his ill-declining health calling him there, and obliging him to quit Covent-Garden theatre; to which place he never more returned. He was the only man in whom Mr. Rich placed any confidence, or whose advice he would listen to. Mr. Ridout being prime minister, he was of course bespattered with plenty of abuse; but he, like me and Benedick, cared not for a satire or an epigram:—for if a man will let himself be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him.

Ridout was extremely glad to see me at Bath, and when my benefit was advertised he sent me a letter desiring three box tickets, and begged my acceptance of the inclosed three guineas, with his best wishes and thanks for having so honourably kept my promise in 1758, not to meddle with his manner of acting any night of my imitations at either of the London theatres. The

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three guineas was meant, it is true, as a *douceur*, and I had some title to accept the cash and not return it; for I certainly had deprived myself of a credit as to the imitation; and I pin my faith more on Mr. Macklin's opinion than on my own merit: for Mr. Macklin when I last saw him declared I had taken such exact measure of Mr. Ridout, that my likeness of him was my master-piece. At Bath he died:—When I saw him there he appeared in a weak languid state, not in immediate danger—

But who can controul his fate?

I so fly-like (Mr. Aircastle myself) from one point to another, that I can apologize, but cannot help being incoherent.

Bath was then certainly a pleasing spot:—Now I am told, and it is well known, that city has increased at an incredible rate of elegance, to the astonishment and admiration of all Europe. In that city Mr. Keasberry treated me with my first dinner, and I was particularly lucky by unexpectedly meeting with an unthought-of blessing; for in a few hours after my name had been published for Richard the Third, I was surprised with the agreeable pleasure of receiving cards from my ever dear remembered friends and patrons Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau and Mrs. Forbes, and some others from Ireland—a most happy intelligence indeed for me, abstracted from interest. Bath was at that time, and still continues, a place of constant, fashionable, and friendly resort of persons of quality and fortune from the kingdom

dom of Ireland: It was in truth a fortunate circumstance, as they immediately introduced me not only to a genteel but fashionable resort of friends, who were of the utmost service in fixing my reputation as a public performer amongst all the circle of their acquaintance, besides the certain allowed credit, convenience, and self-satisfaction on my Bath onset as an actor, to have such eligible and esteemed places to dine at, and be received as a particular friend and visitant at Mr. Chaigneau's in Gay-street, and Mrs. Forbes's in Queen-square, &c. I played a variety of characters there, and it would be tedious and fulsome to repeat the favours I received; every person I knew consulted to make me happy. My benefit was on Monday, April 27, 1761—Confederacy the play, with Tea and the farce of the Guardian—I acted Mrs. Amlet, and the Guardian, with Tea; and in the course of my playing I acted Richard, Lear, Hamlet, and Shylock—parts in the Minor, Cadwallader, Petruchio, &c. My benefit was honoured with so great a demand for places, that the *whole pit was laid into the boxes*, a circumstance which had not been often instanced. A large party, with the late Lord Clive, were that night contented with places in the pit: Indeed a theatre is such a strange place, that the seat which is fashionable one night, is horrid another; for sometimes if only the first rows of the side-boxes are taken the cry is, "Not a place to be had in the boxes; every seat is let!" The front boxes, if Mrs. Siddons acts, are called good places, and acknowledged (as they truly are) to be the best seats

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in the house for seeing a play; but on any night, if not wishing to be at the theatre, and yet wanting an excuse to stay away, the cry is, "It is horrid—it is a bore.—Who can sit in the front boxes? those giblet pies!"

When my nights with Mr. Arthur were expired I had engaged to perform *Lady Pentweazle* and *Cadwallader* for his benefit on Monday, May 4; but Mr. Ballard the Covent-Garden treasurer, (with Shuter's summons) advertised me in the London papers according to my promise, therefore I could not be excused, being so indispensably under an honourable contract to make my appearance in London, and was obliged to quit Bath on Saturday, May 2, and took post-chaise for the purpose. On Sunday noon I unexpectedly met a party of friends at Hounslow, where I spent a cheerful day, and got safe to London in the evening, and was ready to fulfil my duty and promised faith on Monday night. Before I left Bath I agreed to return the Thursday following, May the 7th, to perform for the benefit of Mr. Keasberry.

The Monday night I was in London I had not leisure to see any friend whatever, but was pleasing myself with the thoughts of what vast and uncommon applause I should be favoured with the next night: for my honey-draught on Shuter's benefit had been a great inducement for my incurring the expence of such a post journey. I have often heard Mr. Foote declare, that the change of weather had an effect upon the tempers of the audiences; and also to a certainty it acted differently with the performers as to their spirits,
&c.

&c. The truth of these observations I cannot take upon me to determine, but leave it to the doctors and wiser heads: Every frequenter of a theatre must have at times been insensibly led to observe, that with the same actors, in the same piece, and in the same theatre, the reception, whether it was the weather, the audience, or their own dulness, has been widely opposite. If the audience is not in humour, the performer, let him go on in his best spirits, will flag; but on the contrary, if the audience is in great good humour, and the players flat and insipid, they will catch the fire like electricity; and though the performers went on the stage even in bad health and spirits, they will be transformed and all alert, forget their illness, be *new vigoured*, become what each wishes to personate in the assumed character—

Each bosom's lord sits lightly on its throne,
And all that night an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts them above the ground with cheerful thoughts.

So I on the day of Ballard's benefit, like Mrs. Heidelburgh, longed for the rencounter, and was as usual well received; and I was determined to get applause by giving much more in quantity than what I had done for Shuter's benefit—an ignorant zeal, that, like Shakspeare's Dogberry, had it been ten times more, I would have bestowed all my tediousness on their Worships. But—alas! alas! before I had gone half a stage with my *comic lecture* my numerous auditory appeared to be sleepy and tired. Now, whether it

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was as Mr. Foote had observed the weather, the drowsiness of the audience, or from what other chain of stupidity, I cannot tell; but I rather believe it was owing to a jumble of bad materials, with a double quantity of my own insipidity intermixed. One circumstance I remember perfectly, which was, I thought it would never have been over without Supernatural Aid, or a ghost to tell me so—and I am certain my hearers thought so too. But as it is often said, "It is a long lane that has no turning," so at last the conclusion did come, and two or three friends at the lower end of the hall gave a hand or two, the upper part of the building I believe gave a different kind of token; therefore I did not take the advantage of those few at the lower end, and stay to cry, "Thanks, gentle citizens and friends, &c." but even then took off and made my exit.

Ballard's benefit was composed of all sorts of the lower order of people from every distant quarter of London, the greatest part of whom perhaps did not see three plays in a year, and my imitations were as little understood by the red-cloaked ladies in the front boxes as when I gave Tea at Norwich; in fact it was as Hamlet says, "*Caviare* to the multitude." So I (poor Pilgarlick) had treated myself with a post-chaise jaunt of one hundred miles from Bath to London, and to return back; and all for a bill which my vanity had drawn upon the bank of Folly, the which had no stability, and was not fit to be trusted, as it was protested and returned back on my hands to my own shame and disgrace: This

is true—but not without a good lesson for young people's improvement and future observation—and I consoled myself with never in future playing at hazard for the chance of applause only, without the pecunia, where there were such odds against me. I returned to Bath, and was on the stage on Thursday, May 7, on Mr. Keasberry's night, and when there, had plenty of Spaw-water, very easily purchased, to quench my thirst for applause, when I wanted more than I deserved:—Not but the longing desire of applause is a good incentive to excite spirit and emulation in every young performer; for without ambition few would encounter such various and almost insurmountable difficulties as attend a theatre. I remember Miss Noffiter's saying in the green-room, that all of the theatrical profession should be blessed with more than common philosophy: That we should possess that said serenity I agree to be a right observation, but am far from thinking we are in any great degree honoured with its attendance as a constant companion; in general we have something like an equivalent, and that is great spirits, which glides over little misfortunes, evil tongues, and disappointments, easier than with mankind in general; and good spirits create ease and happiness, and, like death and the dice, levels all distinctions——

Else who would bear the whips and scorns of the time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
And the spurns that patient Merit of th' unworthy takes?

While

While at Bath I was solicited to perform for almost every benefit; I most willingly complied, and acted away most furiously without fee or reward, so was in no danger of suffering on the vagrant act.

The two last plays were *Hamlet* and *Richard the Third*: the first for the benefit of Mr. Williams, (termed the *Ancient Carpenter*) on Friday, June 5, 1761; and the last, for Mr. Wooley the painter, Monday, June 8.—The farce was *Hob in the Well*, in which Mr. Wooley appeared in the character of *Hob*.

The reason for my being so particular as to the days, months, and years, on trifles not worth doubting is, that it helps as a reference to the professed plan with which I set out, and to make good my assertions with those now living, who might think it worth while either to corroborate or contradict my relation of facts with the strictest observance of time and place.

From thence I lounged at Winchester until the new theatre at Portsmouth (building under Mr. Arthur's inspection) was ready for the reception of the Bath Company, at that time under his direction, where I resorted according to beat of drum and marching orders on the 1st of July; but when I saw the desolate state of the building, I judged it impracticable for its wide extended walls to have a play enacted that good year of our Lord: However Arthur was indefatigable; slow, and sure; and in so short a time as Monday, July 20, *Hamlet* was announced for opening our new theatre, with the farce of the Contrivances—
Hamlet,

Hamlet, Mr. Wilkinſon; Polonius, Mr. Arthur; Horatio, Mr. Keafberry; the Queen, Mrs. Lee.

Mrs. Lee was wife to the late Mr. Lee, and mother to the preſent Miſs Lee of Bath: One wrote the pleaſant comedy of the Chapter of Accidents; and the other that entertaining and well-drawn romance of the Receſs. Mr. Lee was well known in London as an actor of merit at Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, alſo as manager and performer at Edinburgh and Bath. But ſome diſpute had happened about a year before I was at Bath between Mr. Lee and Mr. Palmer, (the Bath proprietor) which not being amicably ſettled, Mr. Lee withdrew; but ſhe very ſenſibly (not having given any cauſe for complaint) deſired to be retained.

Our new grand theatre at noon, on the 20th of July, had not the leaſt appearance of being fit to be opened that night, either before or behind the curtain—the whole company were of that opinion: But great men will overcome obſtacles, and the wonder-working incomparable Arthur deſpiſed difficulties. At twelve o'clock at noon there was not one ſeat in the pit, but he actually contrived to get it finiſhed by ſeven. Not any rehearsal was poſſible, as the ſtage was up to one's waſt in ſhavings. The populace were eager to ſee the new playhouſe, new company, and the firſt acted play; but on tra- verſing the ſtreets from four till ſeven, and no admittance, they became very noiſy, the ſailors particularly unruly; when into the ſtreet popped our old croſs commander in chief, Admiral Arthur—not like his advertised character of Polonius, but

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more resembling one of the witches in Macbeth; for he had on an old round flapped hat, a woman's check'd apron, with a large broom in his hand, and his face as begrimed and greasy as a barn-acting Othello in the Dog-days: He harangued the multitude, high and low, and humbly beseeched their patience while himself and the hard-laboured carpenters assisted in sweeping the shavings out of the pit and gallery: He received a good hooting with a laugh, and retired to make his words good by deeds, and Hecate-like he sweated and swept most violently, till the word without was given, as their impatience was beyond bounds; the doors were burst open, the witch and her stick were thrown down and rolled over and over; the broom had no other charms or spells than to assist the cripple to hobble out and escape with all possible expedition; there were no persons ready, or offices fixed to take the money, so each sailor and his lass, or his companion and others seated themselves in such places as suited their fancies. But Arthur to shew his humbleness acted as a wary and careful manager; for, without putting off his apron, as soon as the house had filled and all were a little quiet and seated, in the midst of a cloud of dust he doffed his old brown hat, and went profoundly round the theatre to collect in it from every part what he could either by threats or civility obtain: some did pay, others did not, and some only what they pleased; nor would he have stirred till twelve at night whilst he beheld the glimpse of another dropping shilling to have paid for their forcibly-obtained footing. When he had finished
that

that difficult job he retired to what was absolutely requisite, soap and sand, and in about an hour more (the hour of nine) we proceeded on with our solemnity. Mr. Arthur was transformed—a long old periwig and a sumptuous suit of clothes gracing his person for Polonius (a part which he had often performed in London, and acted truly well); but the lamps and candles having been loaded with the immensity of our kindred dust from Hecate (the manager's outrageous sweepings) had occasioned such a mist and violent heat on the audience-part of the theatre, on the stage, behind the scenes, and had dispersed such an universal melancholy gloom as I never can forget:—every one of the performers, and the well-warmed (nay I may say nearly parched) spectators became reflectors of burning heat to each other, and were almost literally scorched on that night's dangerous undertaking. For my own part I judged I should make my exit as a great man, being no less a personage than the Prince of Denmark; and recollecting the old women's adage, that *a man must swallow a peck of dust ere he dies*, I concluded my time was come, as I by my own suggestion fancied I must that night have gulped that fatal quantity:—however it is evident I survived that suffocation. In three or four nights after, our little theatre was really an elegant, well-approved, and fashionable place of resort; far different from what the families of Portsmouth had ever *then* experienced in point of grandeur, comfort, or regularity; or as a respectable company of comedians.

Indeed

Indeed I do not suppose Mr. Arthur would have opened the theatre in this strange, inconvenient, and contemptuous condition, but from a particular circumstance, which was, that the 20th of July led on to the Portsmouth annual mart; a week of general resort for all sorts of people that assembled yearly to purchase toys, ribands, shippets, &c. therefore had he lost that advantage, he would have missed the capital prize in his theatrical lottery. It was still the time not only of hostility with France, but an honourable, successful, and as glorious a war as any the British annals can boast;—though as to war at Portsmouth the creed of the inhabitants is easily understood by the words of Kate Matchlock in the Funeral, who says, “O rare news! we are going to have a war, and a war’s a war, no matter whether abroad or at home.”—So in fact *war* is the only manufactory of Portsmouth and Plymouth:—And of course that war continuing added much to our good fortune, and was the happy work of more lucky chances. We were soon opposed by the old Plymouth company, of comedians at the old theatre, the ragged regiment I have so often mentioned; but their theatre was so dirty, their conduct so irregular, that they were generally viewed as a vulgar dram-drinking set when compared to our decent demeanour and truly creditable appearance; therefore we were honourably termed the *quality company*: Our house had many advantages, not only as to elegance, but was more commodious and cool; with good wardrobe, scenery, &c.

My night was on Monday, September 26, and was greatly attended; as a proof I believe it was the best in our whole successful season. *Tamerlane* with the *Upholsterer*.—I acted Bajazet, the first scene of Sir Archy, Bucks have at ye All, with Pamphlet and Razor.

Our campaign ended without any particular occurrences on Monday, October 19, 1761, with Henry VIII. and the Coronation: It was acted two nights after the benefits were over. Wolsey, Wilkinson; Gardiner, Arthur; Cranmer, Keasberry; Henry, Stephens the button-maker (once famous as Othello in London); Anna Bullen, Miss Reynolds, late Mrs. Saunders, who acted the Country Girl when it was altered at Mr. Garrick's desire some years ago by Mr. Bickerstaff; Queen Katherine, Mrs. Baker.

Mrs. Baker was a woman of strong understanding, aided by a good and highly-finished education, wonderful natural abilities, and an actress of great capacity, and she had performed three or four parts at Covent-Garden, where they could not deny she possessed much merit; her features were very good, but her figure was short, clumsy, and against her in many parts, which otherwise she was well calculated for. If a line had been drawn of competitorship, the first of that or the present day would have shrunk in the debate as to *comprehension* and real understanding, and yielded to her courtesey. Use is of greater importance than the London or any other audience are aware of.—Mrs. Pritchard was a striking instance, who, with a large figure, was esteemed the best Rosalind, though Mrs. Woffington, the beautiful, was
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her opponent.—Prejudice for some time prevailed much against Mrs. Baker at York, where she acted during the races in August 1768, and one winter 1769; but at the latter part of the season she surmounted those prejudices. At Edinburgh, where she resided some years, she was in universal esteem as an actress; but on a quarrel with Mr. Digges (for her temper was soon ruffled, and she was too apt to rush into the different extremes of love and hate) she hastily quitted the stage, and there undertook the difficult task of teaching the English pronunciation; for which she was not only capable but thoroughly qualified: In so doing she received great promises, (and what was better) great emoluments, all which increased instead of being diminished. She was received as a guest of knowledge and entertaining lively conversation at the first tables in Edinburgh, which honours, at that city, would never without talents have been conferred. Her last performance at Portsmouth was in Queen Katherine.

The coronation to Henry VIII. had double effect from being well timed; his present Majesty King George III. having been crowned on Tuesday, Sept. 22. On that day most of the Hampshire world assembled; for those that could not be in London flocked to Portsmouth, and there beheld at noon a glorious fight indeed; several of our noblest ships of war dressed in their colours, all the officers of their separate denominations decked out in their full uniforms, and every person, both high and low, in their holiday clothes:—whilst all the cannon from the ramparts and shipping, as also from the castle on South-Sea

Common, were echoing and re-echoing resounding thunder, with such a delightful confusion of noise, (as Sir Callaghan O Brallaghan says) that I can no more attempt to give an account of it than to tell the stars in the sky. That heavenly sight was greatly heightened by the additional illumination of Apollo, who had mounted his fiery steeds, and the sun beamed most brilliantly, and hailed one of the most auspicious and splendid days that ever blessed our nation. Almost every reader knows that the prospect from the ramparts at Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight is one of the most delightful in the kingdom. The coronation being the general topic added not a little to curiosity and attraction for our Henry VIII. on that evening; and the play was highly approved by a full audience.

I must not omit before I quit Hampshire to mention, that early in August 1761, Mr. Lee had hired a banditti set of actors to perform at Winchester every Saturday for a few weeks, a camp being there, but far inferior to the incampment I before described the preceding year; but I agreed on such nights to accompany Mrs. Lee, he paying the carriage for two days, the Saturday and Sunday, and to have a clear benefit; which engagement he punctually fulfilled, but we differed about some trifle and did not part friends. Mr. Lee was very fond of teaching to act, with which he amused himself from Saturday to Saturday with almost as thin a company as Gibbet's in the *Beaux Stratagem*—I am sure it did not double it.—The salaries the reader may be sure were poor, as Winchester with the little camp could not afford great

expences

expences so as to procure Mr. Lee a living, and the additional charges of my going there with Mrs. Lee; yet Mr. Lee being known as an actor of merit, the officers were pleased and obliged to him for their Saturday's lounge, and made it a point to do all in their power to support him.— Mr. Lee would not lead off the first play—I believe he was really afraid, his spirits being dashed, as whose would not; like Falstaff, who says, “If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soufed gurnet.”

The first play was on Saturday, August 8, 1761. There was not any thing appeared to Lee to be so practicable as my doing the parts in the Minor, so the Minor was fixed on without any other entertainment whatever; and it was acted from necessity in a very mutilated state, as it was impossible the people Mr. Lee had so suddenly and with difficulty collected could be perfect in the intermediate scenes where I was not concerned: However a very genteel house appeared of Mr. Lee's patrons, and I was well received as their old favourite acquaintance, having been there a whole campaign the year before with the Bath company; so from consideration to Mr. Lee and myself, they went away in perfect good humour, professed themselves pleased and satisfied with their short entertainment.

August 10, we acted the Fair Penitent: Mr. Lee had amused himself with drilling his troops, and the play had one great claim to being well received, as it was very perfect. Lothario, Mr. Lee; Horatio, Mr. Wilkinson; Lavinia, Mrs. Burden, who had acted Charlotte in Love A-la-

Mode at Covent-Garden, and the lady I have so often mentioned as the *infernal limb*; Calista by Mrs. Lee. The farce was Lethe—The Old Man and Lord Chalkstone, Mr. Wilkinson; Frenchman, Mr. Lee.

August 22, Jane Shore. Shore Mr. Lee; Hastings, Mr. Wilkinson:—With a scene from Taste as the entertainment; Lady Pentweazle, Mr. Wilkinson.

August 29, The Way to Keep Him. Love-more Mr. Lee; Bucks have at ye All, Mr. Wilkinson: With the farce of the Author: Mr. Cadwallader, Mr. Wilkinson.

September 5, (By desire of Lady Harriet Conyers) The Provoked Wife: Sir John Brute, Mr. Lee; and for the farce Mr. Wilkinson will give Tea.

September 12, (my last night) Romeo and Juliet: Romeo, Mr. Wilkinson; Mercutio, Mr. Lee. With Bucks have at ye All, and the favourite scene of Sir Archy Mac Sarcaſm from Love A-la-Mode—to a very noble audience, which may be easily accounted for, not only as a reward for the trouble I had undergone of performing, added to the journies, but from my established acquaintance with the gentlemen of the army, as well as with the particular inhabitants of Winchester the preceding year. After the hard duty I had sustained of marching and counter-marching from stage to stage, and the business universally heavy on me at Portsmouth garrison, no wonder if I wished to indulge a few weeks autumn repose, with that best good physician my mother, who was certainly not only my trueſt but moſt agreeable

able friend. After a few days rest I visited my old master Mr. Rich, who had some weeks before ordered Mr. Ballard the treasurer to write me a letter of invitation, and that I was expected by his manager to be in London by the 20th of September, the opening time of the London theatres, with an offer of *6l.* per week, and to be ready in the character of Bayes, and to sign an article for three years, benefits included in the proposal. My engagement with Mr. Arthur, rendered a compliance (with honour or any degree of honesty) impossible. My non-attendance much offended Mr. Rich, as he thought (and very justly) he had made me a very genteel and comfortable offer; but after I had two or three times attended his morning levees, we became as good friends as ever. He even condescended to request a favour, which was, that I would make my first appearance in a farce, which he told me secretly in confidence, was of his own writing; and I have reason to believe it was, and that it will not be eagerly contradicted or claimed on account of its bequeathed honours to posterity. It was called the *Spirit of Contradiction*. He said, if I would but act the part of the Gardener from his *larning*, it would make my fortune, *provided* I would implicitly yield to his instructions. I had by that time grown so familiarized to Mr. Rich's oddities, that I unfeignedly held him in great regard and esteem, and in the true sense of the word, believe he was a worthy and respectable gentleman; for tho' I well remembered he pronounced a very unfavourable opinion of me some years before when I was really distressed, yet in our after serious acquaint-

ance I often experienced many acts of kindness, good wishes, and cordiality, which fully made me amends, and my former seeming ill luck had made me often read the book called Experience. Too often neglected in all stages of life, for the prevention of errors which lead to misfortunes.

When I spoke of the Gardener for Mr. Shuter (who was the Edwin of the time) instead of myself, he took his snuff, stroaked his cat, and said, "If I give it *Muste Shuttleworth* he will not let me teach him, and he is so idle: I want it perfect *Muste Williamskin*; but I will *larn* you *Muste*, if you will play the part from my tuition.

We were one noon, hard at work with the part of the Gardener, when Mr. Younger the prompter abruptly came into the room on urgent and immediate stage state-affairs. Rich perceiving him, turned hastily about, and in a rage said, "Get away *Muste Youngmore*, I am teaching *Muste Whittington* to act." If questioned why I have spoken of Mr. Rich so respectfully, yet draw such a caricature? I answer, my obligations to him at first were not those of a good kind, that I altered my opinion, by having notions superior to prejudice, and as a true drawing of character, without giving tints of these oddities, strangers would have no true notion of Mr. Rich's real manner and personal oddities: And I wish every writer, good or bad, never dealt in more satire or intention of doing harm than my insignificant self. Indeed Mr. Rich's peculiarities are not here observed as a novelty, for his best friends then, and those who now remain, cannot
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but say the relation is not more whimsical than true.

When I had undergone six days lessons, and repeated the Gardener line by line, and to the best my ear could conduct me, Mr. Rich said, "No engagement with his *larning* me, unless confirmed by an article signed for three years." Now I had been so weary of Mr. Garrick's tyranny, and above all loved to ramble, and was so habituated to get money and be my own master, that I could not by any means relish the least idea of bondage; for being at liberty (exclusive of the profit) seemed doubly pleasant and alluring. So in short, after a pause, with hesitation, and finding I could not gulp down an article, I frankly told him my disposition; but that I was notwithstanding at his command, on his proffered terms for ten weeks only; whereat my old master grew angry, I turned fullen, and our interview concluded as follows:—

Mr. Rich. So you will not sign your article *Muster Williamskin*, and let me *larn* you?

Mr. Wilkinson. No, Sir—Articles may be repented on both sides, and I would rather agree for a shorter term, and renew, if mutually agreeable.

Mr. Rich. Why then, *Muster Williamskin*, what will you do? for *Muster Grislin* (Mr. Garrick) told me in the summer he would *never* engage you again; you have offended him *Muster*, and he will never forgive you; and *Muster Williamskin*, you did not attend my theatre when summoned, and I not only made you a liberal offer,

offer, but endeavoured to be the making of you by *larning* you to act.

Mr. Wilkinſon. My good Sir, I am truly obliged to you for your offers; but muſt repeat, I do not reliſh a confined engagement—Rather than be under an article for three years, I would prefer rambling for ſix; therefore, good Sir, with my ſincere thanks and wiſhes, unleſs you will agree for ten weeks, I mean to ſet ſail in a few days for Ireland.

His aſtoniſhment and answer I ſhall never forget, though his prophecy was not in reſpect to myſelf verified, yet I have reaſon to fear ſome adventurers poſſeſſed of too much faith in promiſes, woefully experienced real diſappointment.

Mr. Rich [ſternly.] *Muſter Williamſkin*, I'll tell you what will be the conſequence of your headſtrong ignorance; you will go over to Dublin, and engage with the tall man, *Muſter Barlymore*, he will promiſe you a large ſalary, of which you will not receive a ſecond guinea; for that *Muſter Barlymore* can wheedle a bird from the tree, and ſqueeze it to death in his hand*. *Muſter Williamſkin*, here is five guineas as a ticket for your Iriſh benefit, that you may be ſure of ſomething. I wiſh you a good journey—your ſervant. He left the room in a pet, and the five guineas in my hand; and though I was no lawyer, I was not ſo ignorant as not to retain the fee, and that was my laſt viſit and converſation with the *really good Mr. Rich*. He

* This was a ſevere caricature of Barry, but ſhrewd and too near a reſemblance.

died soon after, during the run of his splendid coronation.

The day before the fracas happened, I had received a letter of pressing invitation from Mr. Mossop, then manager of Smock-Alley theatre in Dublin. That unexpected treaty could not have been brought about after Mossop's declared aversion, had it not been for the willing interference of Counsellor Barrett. That gentleman had a strong partiality for Mr. Mossop, as a friend and an actor; they had been bred I understood at college together, which lasting intimacy induced Mr. Barrett to be ever ready to contribute towards conciliation and acts of kindness; for the which, I doubt he suffered very considerably (tho' willingly) by frequently encroaching on his own substantial finances to the generously assisting Mossop with material sums at times when bewildered, and plunged in his fatal airy scheme of being an opposing manager, which too frequently occasioned various occurrences and disasters at different periods; for which generous benevolence, I fear the friendly hearted Counsellor never had a chance or possibility of being reimbursed: however he was affluent, and did not want money, but the distressed actor unhappily did. I relate this from conjecture only, never having been on a footing of intimacy with Mr. Barrett to enable me to vouch for its authenticity, though infinitely obliged to him in Ireland, in 1760, for many civilities which I am ever pleased to acknowledge; likewise his being instrumental to the bringing me and Mr. Mossop on terms of amity once more in 1762: but that governor of restless

less players was not by any means blessed with a tythe of Mr. Barry's pleasing abilities as an actor, or generous qualities as a man or manager. Mr. Barry had certainly a most enchanting fascination beyond the general lot of mankind; as a proof, it was seldom either creditor or *enemy* left Barry in an ill humour, however in other respects dissatisfied or disappointed. Mr. Mossop was overloaded with a quantity of combustibles, consisting of pride, insolence, arrogance and gall. I reviewed the difference as to the respective managers; but Mossop's offer claimed a priority of preference, as being the first, and that offer was liberal. The reader will think it strange that Mossop should have any engagement with me after his declarations; but he judged (I suppose) it was better policy to keep such a mischievous monkey in his own theatre, where he might play his tricks at the expence of the enemy, than suffer pug to be at the opposite one, and be let loose upon himself. He wrote me word I might depend on every friendship in his power, to render his theatre agreeable; and insinuated, that after his generous presentation he trusted I would not deal so unlike a gentleman when I arrived in Dublin, as to enter or listen to any terms whatever as to engaging with Barry and Woodward, which I assented to. On my arrival Mr. Mossop and I soon settled all preliminaries, it was early in January and a few days after Christmas holidays. My first appearance was in the *play* of the Minor, (which two years before had been damned as a *farce*): it would have been hazardous; but its being insinuated and advertised with a pompous

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account of the amazing run and success it had met with at all the three theatres in London, not omitting to mention considerable alterations, which by so doing obtained a verdict in favour of seeing and hearing it acted. And as Mr. Foote has been mentioned to have observed the difference of weather, humours, and various accidents that make for and against to render it impossible to account for the uncertain changes in theatrical events, so the Minor was acted to a very fine house, received with universal applause, and continued to be performed twice a-week to good houses.

My imitation of Mrs. Bellamy (in Shift), with the Introduction, the Puppets, and a Mock Burletta Imitation, &c. were of great service. The Minor was well supported, as may be perceived by the following cast.—I acted Mr. Foote's characters; the Minor, Mr. Jefferson; Mr. Wealthy, Mr. Sowden; Sir William, Mr. Baddely; Loader, Mr. Ryder:—Lucy, Mrs. Kelf. In that theatre I met with my agreeable friend, Mrs. Abington, in high estimation; she did not see her old friend Tate with a new face. She had grown weary of being connected with Barry and Mrs. Dancer, as the latter could not relish the triumph of Miss Notable, nor could Miss Notable patiently submit to the insolence and affected superiority of Mrs. Conquest. My agreeable acquaintance Mrs. Kelf, now Mrs. Egerton, with her mother and sister, were at Mossop's theatre; and if this book falls into her hands, she will laugh very heartily on recollecting the many happy days, and whimsical adventures which occurred

occurred that winter in dear Dublin. Whenever I remember the happiness I there experienced, and the numerous obligations I received in that city, I sigh and languish for another peep, ere I depart to meet my many good friends of great Britain and Ireland which have gone before me, to that country *from whose bourn no traveller returns.*

Mr. Mossop and myself, for the first three weeks, were on the most intimate footing. I dined twice with him at Dr. Wilson's apartments in Trinity College; he was a staunch friend of Mossop's. (I believe the Smock-alley theatre was Dr. Wilson's property.) These dinners, I surmised, were intended to induce me, by their mutual rhetoric and persuasion, to attack Barry and Woodward; but that I declined from policy. For I prophetically judged it most likely that this sudden apparent friendship would not be of very long duration, as I knew in his heart he hated me: so the foundation which I depended on his good will was very weak and frivolous; and when he wanted to be quit of me, I should have shut Barry's doors against my sweet self. However I proposed, over our claret, to take great pains with Woodward's favourite character of the Barber, and he might advertise my name for it in the manner of the original, which seemed to please Mossop much; a plain proof how we relish satire against others, and how little we allow for it against ourselves: It was immediately brought forward.

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The next day after being with Mr. Mossop, I waited on the attractive Abington, and implored her assistance in *Termagant*, which she good naturedly complied with. She was at that juncture of time in her full bloom and prime of life: she has had her day—Miss Farren now has her day; and she, I hope, will live like the French beauty *Madam Ninon de l'Enclos*, who captivated her son by her charms when she was at the age of seventy.

I told Mrs. Abington I should revive the *Jealous Wife* for my night, if she would favour me with playing Mrs. Oakley, she consented to study it against the 22d of February. Indeed she, that winter, as well as in 1760, paid me great civilities, and I never received a favour in my life that I was not grateful for, and ever ready and proud to acknowledge. It was surprising that so truly good a comedy should have been in print two winters, and not brought forward properly at either of the Dublin theatres. We acted the *Author* three or four nights, and it was commanded by their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland; his Grace was at that time the Lord Lieutenant. The Upholsterer was often repeated, and I was esteemed so very like Woodward in the part, by my having so exactly copied his manner and dress, that I do not believe Colley Cibber's relation of his likeness of Dogget in *Fondlewife* was in truth beyond my exact representation of Woodward in the Barber. Lady Pentweazle also helped to make out my twelve nights, with the repeating the successful comedy of the *Jealous Wife*, in which

which I acted Mr. Oakley. That year, early in March 1762, both the tragedy candidates Barry and Mossop, had fixed on performing Othello on the same Monday, for their benefit play. Mossop relying on his novelty, Barry on his long-established reputation; the partisans prepared for battle, bets ran high and furious as in the present days for pugilism. Mossop's holder of the stakes was the Countess of Brandon, heavy in demeanour, but alert in apprehension. Her ladyship solicited his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, to command Mossop's night, to which he generously assented; but wisely contrived to occasion a cessation of hostilities between the two combatants, by promising to Barry, that provided he would postpone his night to the Tuesday, he would also command that evening's entertainment, by which means the town would be kept in good humour, the particular friends of each rest satisfied, and, his Grace also added, he should (by such attention and compliance from Mr. Barry) not be deprived the pleasure of seeing him in his favourite character of Othello, which always afforded him the highest satisfaction.— Barry of course complied, and was not inwardly displeased that the critics (without a division) would have such an immediate opportunity to compare notes on the skill and superiority of the declared opponents. On this remarkable occasion each house was equally thronged, though Barry's on the Tuesday was the greatest receipt, as Crow-street was capable of containing more than Smock-alley; otherwise party zeal added to curiosity, raised auditors in such superabundance

dance as would have filled Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden theatres. As to victory, Barry's Othello was so meritorious as to make Mossop's viewed at a distance only; he was as much superior in the valiant Moor, as Mossop would have been to Barry in Richard or Zanga. I sat the evening of Mossop's benefit in an upper box, where a lady, who sat next me, exclaimed on Mossop's first appearance, with an archness and humour peculiar to that nation, "O! faith Mossop has got two eyes in his belly?" This shrewd remark was occasioned by his wearing a heavy embossed shape, (fit for Brutus or Cato) a dragon's face on the breast, with two large glaring red stones for the eyes, his face and wig being black, conveyed exactly what the lady had so ironically expressed. Mr. Barry, though masterly that night of controversy, had frequently shewn himself to more advantage, merely owing to his then taking too great pains in his favourite and much esteemed part; which proves, that lucky accidents fortunately combined with nature will perchance strike out more beauties for an artist than all the most determined force of premeditation.

Mr. Mossop that year had an Italian opera company, which was of infinite service to him, but astonishingly hurt his own consequence: for what with parties and other diversions of routs, assemblies, concerts, &c. with which Dublin in the winter abounds, and opposed by the forces of Woodward and Barry (for they still maintained their fashion and good report) the great box nights were chiefly confined to those of the bur-

lettas.

lettas. That agreeable singer and actress *Signora De Amici* was the principal, and was almost adored; she after that greatly succeeded at the opera house in London, as the first serious woman singer.

These Italian comic operas were all the rage, and were supported at the following prices:—boxes, pit, and lettices, 5s. 5d.—middle gallery, 2s. 2d.—upper gallery, 1s. 1d. Dublin was then torn to pieces by the perpetual application for one theatre or the other; it was reduced quite to a party matter. The Countess of Brandon would not be seen at Crow-street upon any account, but attended constantly at her dear Mossop's. Barry, I believe had at least converted the ladies two to one in his favour. Barry's making love, when on the stage, left tender impressions; but yet this play-begging at last grew troublesome, and ended with fatal circumstances, of which an exact account has before been given.

Mossop, when he had a good house, instead of endeavouring to extricate himself in any degree from his multiplicity of difficulties, grew desperate, and instead of paying either his tradesmen or performers, flew to the gay circles, where he was gladly admitted; and in order to mend his broken fortune by the chance of a die or the turn up of a card, of which I believe he was ignorant, and unacquainted with the necessary arts to succeed. He has often left the theatre with a hundred guineas in his pocket, and returned home with an aching head and heart; but his guineas, with debts of honour, were all left behind. The Countess of Brandon served him greatly it is true; but

but often the money she occasioned being paid at the theatre returned to her own coffers. This was the universal opinion of Dublin, and is all I can allege in that case as to its authenticity; and, as to Mossop's poverty, there needs no evidence for that unfortunate reality.

This conduct, and a train of evils attendant thereon, soon preyed upon his health, involved his talents with himself, and gave bitter sours to that temper which was, in its natural source, far from being one of the best. An instance of the poverty his performers were reduced to in 1764 I will, with permission, relate.

The Distressed Mother was to be acted—Orestes, Mr. Mossop; Andromache, by Mrs. Burden (whom I have so often mentioned.)—The salaries had not been paid for several weeks, and she was in true character as the distressed woman. With infinite difficulty she forced access to the General Mossop; for it was hard to accomplish admittance on account of many inconvenient reasons, unless on a Sunday, and on that grand levee day performers and tradesmen were too menial to be admitted. But with the force of a heroine, who dauntless surmounts all barriers and tyrants at will, so Mrs. Burden burst into the “inmost recess of his prison house,” and when arrived at the royal hall, she was as determined to preserve character—for at the awful voice of Mossop she, Andromache-like, was prostrate at the feet of her royal master, and uttered forth in tragic tones, “O! Sir, for God's sake assist me, I have not bread to eat, I am actually starving, and shall be turned out into the streets.”

Mossop.

Mossop. (*In state.*) Wo-man!—you have five pounds per week, wo-man!

Mrs. Burden. True Sir: But I have been in Dublin six months, and in all that time have only received six pounds.—I call every Saturday at the office for my salary—but no money, is the answer: besides, Sir, your credit and your honour is at stake; how can I play Andromache, the Trojan Queen, without black satin shoes?

Mossop. Woman, begone! I insist on your having black satin shoes for Androm-a-che. And, wo-man, if you *dare* ask me for money again, I will forfeit you ten pounds, wo—man.—So ended that real tragical scene of penury and pomposity.

My benefit that year, Feb. 22, 1762, was as usual, very great indeed, it could not be better. My play (as before related) was the Jealous Wife.—Oakley (with a prologue of Garrick's) Mr. Wilkinson; Major Oakley, Mr. Baddely; Lord Trinket, Mr. Jefferson; Charles, Mr. Reed; Russet, Mr. Heaphy; Sir Harry, Mr. Ryder; Capt. O'Cutter, Mr. Sparks:—Lady Freeclove, Miss Kennedy; Harriet, Miss Macartney; Mrs. Oakley, Mrs. Abington: With Tea, Bucks have at ye All, and the farce of the Country House.

My engagement with Mossop being expired, I intended soon leaving my old favourite spot, which was now become a home; but was detained by Mrs. Abington's requesting I would stay and assist her in a scene of fun and humour for her benefit night, which she had complied with at the request of her really good benefactor Lord

Miltown.

Miltown. Mrs. Abington had often entertained several genteel parties with some droll stories of a good gentlewoman she named Mrs. Fuz. I had been on parties with Lord Miltown and Lord Clanbrassil, when in high spirits and good humour, and had diverted myself and the company with stories and anecdotes of my dear favourite old lady, Mrs. White, of whom the reader must by this time have formed some idea, by referring back to what I have before related of my darling old gentlewoman's singularities.

Mrs. Abington had promised Lord Miltown she would produce herself as Mrs. Fuz, and she would prevail on her friend Wilkinson to do the same, as Mrs. Jenkins (alias Mrs. White); which information his Lordship made known to all the families of distinction in Dublin: but the peer did not reflect, that those stories told by myself or Mrs. Abington, over the convivial table gave a kind of explanatory key to the strange characters; and Sir Francis Delaval and Mr. Foote knew the mother and the daughters, as well as myself; but on a stage where few of the audience were acquainted either with the character that Mrs. Abington or I represented, the joke was as difficult to find out as Mr. Bayes's laughing violently at his own Prince Volscius, where the joke lay in the boots.—Her play was *Rule a Wife—Leon*, Mr. Mossop; *Copper Captain*, Mr. Brown:—*Estifania*, Mrs. Abington. Between the play and farce, an interlude called *Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Fuz*. Mrs. Jenkins, Mr. Wilkinson; Mrs. Fuz, Mrs. Abington. Before the night came, we often entertained ourselves with extempore

tempore rehearsals, and conceived ourselves easy, perfect, and entertaining. Mrs. Jenkins was dressed before the play concluded. Mrs. Abington, after an epilogue of shrewd turn, and spoke with great point, retired to dress as Mrs. Fuz; our dress had been before well considered.—It was a crowded house; part of the pit laid into the boxes. Mrs. Abington had ordered an excellent supper, superbly lighted, &c. and had wrote a little introductory dialogue-scene in the street between two gentlemen, giving a description of a party they were that night invited to, and where two extraordinary characters were asked for the entertainment of the lady's guests, at whose house the rendezvous was appointed; but each person was enjoined to lay their fingers on their lips, and not to laugh on any account whatever, but to pay every mark of attention and approbation, in order that the two ladies might with more unlimited freedom display their different absurdities. After the dialogue was finished, the scene was drawn up, and discovered several well-dressed ladies and gentlemen at supper:—Miss Ambrose was sitting at my elbow as the daughter of Mrs. Jenkins, who intended bringing her on the stage:—Mrs. Fuz was seated at one front corner of a long supper table, and I was at the other: Mrs. Kelf was at the head as lady of the ceremonies, which was the only good part, for there were the servants with wine, and she displayed on the occasion her being mistress of a good knife and fork. On being discovered, and looking scornfully at each other, our two figures had for some time a fine effect; loud fits

of

of laughter succeeded, and from these great expectations were formed.

Mrs. Fuz then desired Mrs. Jenkins to begin—Mrs. Jenkins desired Mrs. Fuz would do the same—and we found ourselves in an awkward situation: But after a few efforts the two ladies entered into a hobbling short conversation, which was received very well, from the eager opinion that something better would follow, for the audience were all eyes and ears; but we soon flagged: Mrs. Fuz asked for a glass of wine—says Mrs. Jenkins, *upon my soul* and I will have a glass of *wind* too. Then Mrs. Fuz said, when she was first married her two *breastfeses* were so large, you might have carried a plate of salt upon them:—That did not do, and the Abington began to feel it a service of danger, perplexity, and disgrace.—Mrs. Jenkins called to her daughter to act Juliet, and observe her manner, and to stick herself upon the stage as if she was chilled and stabbed *thresout*: But as she kneeled down to act Juliet, the strange old lady, Mrs. Fuz, got up, gave her a kick, ran away, and abandoned Mrs. Jenkins to the mercy of the audience; I was well aware of what might be expected, and therefore lost no time, but arose and ran after her, crying out, “Mrs. Fuz! Mrs. Fuz!”—The audience began to smoke the joke, and by their tokens of anger gave the necessary hint to the staring ladies and gentlemen on the stage, that a retreat would not be imprudent if they regarded their safety; so they ran away also, which caused a laugh; for it was evident when Mrs. Abington and I had eloped, they were ignorant what to do, not knowing

knowing but that we meant to return, for they were only desired to stay on till we finished, which the performers could not conceive would be so abruptly as we made it, but expected us to come back and make a conclusion to our characters.

I hope Mrs. Abington has not forgot this, but will laugh at it as I do; though it was truly awkward at the time, and it really drew Lord Miltown into disgrace, for he had said so much in favour of the promised scene, that it had been the conversation of the preceding week.

When the curtain dropped, which was with loud marks of censure, the ladies universally arose, and, by way of joke, laughed and courtied to each other, saying, "Your servant, Mrs. Jenkins; your servant, Mrs. Fuz!"—which I dare say vexed his Lordship much, not only for his own and the disappointment of the audience, but more so, as any failure of Mrs. Abington's was mortifying to him; for he was then, and I am told is now a most violently attached and true patron and well-wisher of hers. Mrs. Abington, in her epilogue after *Estifania*, had spoke some lines very sarcastically aimed at Mr. Woodward; who, to speak truth, deserved it at her hands: they were very severe, and her being so great a favourite, and delivering them most excellently in Woodward's manner, stung him to the quick. Indeed he was so much irritated by her arch exhibition, that it put a stop to my intended sail for England, and was the occasion of an intimacy between him and me; as till then it had so happened that I had never met with, spoke to, or
hardly

hardly seen Mr. Woodward, but in his profession on the stage. He directed my old acquaintance, Joseph Austin, to call on me, with an invitation to supper the Sunday night following my great performance, united with Mrs. Abington's, which I could not refuse, as I had an impulse, I may add, to be acquainted with a gentleman of such merit as an actor, and a worthy and valuable character as a man.

Mr. Austin introduced me on the Sunday evening, and supposing secrets of state were not to be divulged, left us to a roast fowl and mince-pies, with the help of two bottles of claret to grow wise and intimate; for with an Englishman the second bottle is absolutely necessary for those purposes, though I know by long experience not so salutary for the health. Mr. Woodward paid me the compliment of saying he wished to be on a footing of intimacy; hoped I would become his real friendly acquaintance, and make his table my own while I remained in Dublin, when at leisure or not particularly engaged; and further said, at that time he kept not any company, for the manner of living in Dublin was too free—Mrs. Woodward was on her dying bed, and a friend in that situation would be his only comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction, to pass away a dreary hour.

From that night we formed an acquaintance, and he offered me twenty guineas for playing four nights, and a clear one for my benefit. I urged with truth that I feared a second benefit would fail, especially as I had been honoured with so many great ones, and that my friends in

particular would not like it, (which was really the case). Woodward urged in palliation, that was his reason for offering me twenty guineas, and he would not advise me to trouble or think of my friends attendance, so lately called on, but inform them I did not expect their appearance again on that occasion: and added, as you are on the spot you had better continue five or six weeks; and if the receipt is but indifferent, it will be taking so much without trouble: This seemed feasible—I liked Dublin—and as it suited my inclination, and was practicable, I consented; and I believe we had a third bottle as a signing the contract. Woodward, I must observe, was a sober man to a degree, not fond of parties, but liked to chat with a friend; and over a bottle he would often stretch a point. I was enlisted once more in the same regiment with Joseph Austin:—The first night I played (there was a very fine house) Kiteley, in Every Man in his Humour; which character, from some cause or another, had been wanting from the two seasons of Mossop's departure; Bobadil, by the *only* Bobadil of present memory, Mr. Woodward; and with Buck in the Englishman returned from Paris, &c. made out the four nights, but not within the time I was engaged: As his wife's death kept him some weeks off the stage, and greatly retarded my intended expedition, and by that serious intervention drove my benefit till the 25th of May. The play was the Tender Husband; or, the Accomplished Fools:—Numps, Mr. Woodward; Sir Harry Gubbin, Mr. Wilkinson; Captain Clerimont, Mr. Dexter; Biddy Tipkin, Mrs. Dancer.—

Dancer.—With a paltry piece of stuff I called The Auction; wherein I was the Auctioneer: My friend Joseph, always ready to assist, acted a part called Lady Toothless:—In which interlude we gave a specimen of the French Harlequin Comedy, with what wit Master Tate and Master Joseph could bestow on their good-natured audience, not much to our credit; but we escaped to the full as well as Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Fuz.—The Farce was Thomas and Sally: I acted Dorcas as an Italian, and really with good reception and success; my broken English and imitation of foreign manners were so preserved within proper bounds, as I may pronounce of myself was tolerable, and at the finish spoke the exact words, and in the manner of Signora De Amicé, the greatly followed Italian singer of that season at Smock-Alley theatre, which had a catch of quick applause and laughing approbation.

“Me am sorry, me am extremely sorry me cannot speak better Englis:—Me return my sincere tanks for dis grat a favor:—Me would vish bettar, much bettar vords to express my gratitude.”

The evening finished with great laughter, but the sum total I received was only 28l. some odd shillings. I must not forget a particular circumstance which happened that very night at the conclusion of the Tender Husband; all had gone on smoothly till the end of the comedy, when on a sudden even Woodward was planet struck—no one could proceed—the audience hissed—Woodward crossed the stage to me, and authori-

tatively chid me for not speaking the tag: I said *he* was wrong, and disclaimed any knowledge of a line more in my part. I spoke to Mr. Dexter—Mr. Dexter to Mrs. Dancer (now Mrs. Crawford), and with disgrace the curtain dropped: and after each person looking on the other, like searching for one's knee-buckle in a hurry, which at the same time is often where it should be; so we, on inspection, found the last speech and tag belonged to Mr. Dexter, who was a very perfect actor in general. But the same misfortune has been known in London to have happened: for when it comes to the tag, as we call it, of a well-known play, we at rehearsals, like careless people at church, begin to move off before the blessing is pronounced; and from that omission in the morning it begets inattention, and we fall into the pool of disgrace at night: So when the book was produced, it told in glaring letters that Mr. Dexter was the defaulter. Now, says the reader, where was the prompter? Why, my good Sir, or Madam, when players come to what we call a stand-still, they are then dumb-founded, stupid animals, and cannot say *ba*.—We are not always the wisest of mankind, nor yet quite so ignorant and vulgar, as we are sometimes honoured by the kind estimation of too many: and be it observed and remembered, that accidents will happen in the best governed families.

Another odd theatrical adventure happened at that very time: Mr. King, who was as great an established favourite as I ever remember in Dublin, (not even Woodward excepted) not having been in Ireland from the spring 1759 till that of

1762,

1762, Mr. Garrick had given him leave three or four weeks before Drury-Lance closed, hoping he would have obtained fine gleanings in the month of May, by visiting his Dublin friends and admirers after an absence of three years. Great expectations were formed, yet the attraction failed, and on his benefit in particular, which was the Monday after mine; for an influenza had seized men, women, and children: I never was worse with any illness than at that time. Austin and I were in the middle gallery on his benefit night, when I do not believe there were twelve persons there besides, nor much more than 141. in the house even though Mr. King played Bayes in the Rehearsal, and had to change his dress between two or three of the acts, for he spoke Bucks have at ye All! and acted in Mr. Garrick's Interlude of the Farmer's Return from London, and had his abilities, assisted by a very good company, as may be seen in the bill of the Jealous Wife.

Mr. King's good sense will not be angry at this recital, for it is an instance of the power of fashion, more or less, in every place: But when Mr. King, a few seasons after, returned, the people were not so unwitted; for on his being advertised to appear in Lord Ogleby, it was with the utmost difficulty a seat could be obtained, not only for his first night, but several succeeding ones; all ran in crowds to see their old favourite Tom King every time he performed, though a very bad set of players to assist him.

Dublin is remarkable for doing a great deal for the actor, or nothing; and if one particular

part by a performer happens to please their fancies and judgment, once a week to the end of the season it will fill the house. The winter 1788, in November and December, he performed with as high spirits and more profit than on any preceding trip he ever made there; and was so caressed and esteemed by every one, that they were not contented when his first engagement was finished with the manager, and therefore he agreed for twelve nights more after Christmas, which was equally beneficial with the first: and the Irish hospitality was such, that it is well he got away with safety; for wherever they esteem, they are apt to endanger the healths of their guests with acts of kindness. He then went to Scotland and performed four nights at Glasgow, (which run in regular progression, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) and each night to an overflowing house. On the Saturday he travelled forty-four miles from Glasgow to Edinburgh, where at six o'clock there was not a seat to be had in any part of the theatre, and at seven o'clock he was on the stage receiving the warmest welcome from an audience, pleased to see not only so excellent an actor, but a gentleman whose own natural good qualities were superior (or at least must be allowed equal) to his abilities as the player.

Owing to the influenza having confined me for some few days, and not having any engagement confirmed either in Ireland or England to call me from Dublin, I did not depart, though my engagement finished on the 25th of May. Wishing for a little country air, I requested my friend Austin

to

to dine with me at one of those pleasant villages with which Dublin is romantically and delightfully surrounded. At our return, on entering the metropolis, I accidentally cast my eyes on the plaistered-up play-bill, and, to my infinite surprise, read "The Orphan: Castalio, Mr. Barry, &c. and between the play and farce Mr. *Wilkinson* will give TEA: After which, Mr. Macklin's Love A-la-Mode." I thought it very strange, unprecedented, and rude behaviour, my nights being expired, and my time delayed, that Mr. Barry or Mr. Woodward should improperly advertise me for what I was not then prepared for at their territories, and that done by one or both without a line or message. I felt myself angry and hurt, and declared I would not attend the theatre, but Mr. Austin persuaded me much not to abide by that resolution: He urged, that the managers had acted rather cavalierly, but judged it much more advisable to avoid offending my friends or the public, or even the managers; we might meet again: it was always better to be on terms with those leaders in power; and he did not doubt but they meant to pay me some compliment. To this friendly admonition and advice I not only attentively listened, but obeyed its dictates, went to my lodgings, dressed and prepared to give some jumbled performance at the playhouse: when there, I complained of the ill behaviour, which the graces of Barry soon made easy, and prevented me from permitting rage to fire my bosom. When the Orphan finished, and Barry had, as the unhappy husband of Monimia, departed to the imaginary shades, I in a few minutes informed Mr.

Carmichael the prompter, that I was ready to give the whole house Tea, though without cups and saucers ; but just when the curtain was drawing up, the said Carmichael came in a violent hurry and told me he came with peremptory orders from Mr. Barry, that I must not on any pretext whatever attempt to proceed with my part of the entertainment for the evening until the end of Love A-la-Mode, and that Mr. Macklin insisted on that injunction being complied with.

Mr. Macklin was ever tenacious of his favourite offspring, and he judged, I do conjecture, that any delay or laugh *immediately after* the tragedy from the audience might in some small degree take off the relish when Love A-la-Mode began. However I persisted, that if I obliged Mr. Barry with doing what he had not the least right to command or expect, I would, unless I was then permitted to perform, instantly quit the theatre: To that declaration Barry did not pay much attention ; and as he was ever intimidated by Mr. Macklin, and tremblingly alive and fearful of his desertion to Mossop, the mortal opponent of Crowstreet citadel, of course neither my petition nor remonstrance could prevail ; and I, as obstinate as either, not only left the royal army under the command of the master revellers, but, instead of going home, retired to Mr. Acheson's, a private and worthy family in Trinity-lane, where I was assured not any pursuers would ever dream of finding me ; or indeed if they had, I should not have returned.

After

After inquiring as to the termination of the evening at the playhouse, I was informed that all went on smoothly; the piece received the tribute due to its merit, and Macklin, Barry, Woodward, and Messink a repetition of approbation which their respective merits had so frequently obtained: Not one of the three leading personages had cast a thought on Wilkinson, nor did they suppose he would be called for; or if he was, that a slight apology from the manager of Mr. Tate's departure would settle all matters amicably.

But the event proved much to the contrary; for when the farce finished, and the audience were judged to be departing, on peeping through the curtain a few minutes after their supposed *exiunt omnes*, they were all espied in dread array, and as regularly seated as they had been viewed the hour preceding; and on neither preparatory music giving the elevating sound, nor Mr. W. making his expected appearance, from a murmur a violent clamour ensued, when speedily Mr. Barry stepped forward and informed the large assemblage the whole matter; that Mr. W. it was true had been there, but for what reason Mr. B. could not divine Mr. W. had as unexpectedly as suddenly eloped: however, that would not in the smallest degree pacify them; they judged their rights infringed, and their authority much imposed upon, insisted on my being sent for, and said they would sit patiently till I attended and fulfilled my duty—but all the messengers' search was fruitless—and, indeed, had it been otherwise, and they had found me in my hiding-place, I should not have returned to have endured the wrathful resentments

and disgrace I certainly had not deserved and must have suffered, but, snail-like, would have pulled in my horns, and kept snug and secure within my shell. For the manager certainly, (as I was not engaged then to him) had not the right or the power to act as he did ; and I, forewarned of the displeasure I had incurred, had prudently determined I would not venture my sweet self again in their field of battle that year of our Lord. On their patience being exhausted, and Mr. Barry's assurance of the various means taken to recover the lost sheep, the whole blame fell (as was likely upon poor Tate, and the departing guests, one and all, pronounced great punishment on my devoted head whenever it next popped before them, and declared to the manager they would not miss any opportunity to treat me with a dish of *their tea* in lieu of my own. All this vexatious, unlucky matter, with various ill-natured and increasing additions, the next day or two much perplexed and distressed me, the more so as I was not without visitors, who in general condemned my conduct, nor would yield to my being in the right, even admitting the other party to have been ever so wrong :— For they observed, as my engagement was finished, I could effectually have prevented any future mistake of the kind ; and even if what I intended to present to the public had lost some trifling applause, or had not been relished by the audience, it was not to be balanced against the almost certainty of offending many, if not all of those whom I had been so constantly obliged ; and indeed it must be granted, though I was favoured with many partial friends, I should with deliber-

tion on the other hand have considered that I was not without numerous enemies—many deservedly so—who would assuredly rejoice at such an open opportunity of relating it greatly to my disadvantage. Now, as to who was most in the wrong, my different readers must determine. Not that I escaped entirely without punishment, as in the year 1764 I experienced an unexpected and whimsical retaliation, which will be truly related in its proper time and place in this salmagundi dish of all sorts prepared by Mr. Garrick's exotic. The important subject very soon ceased, and was put a stop to by the sudden appearance of Mrs. Pritchard from London, who never had been in Ireland, and was engaged on large terms to perform a few nights with Mr. Barry: Her long established fame, her excellent private character, and universally acknowledged worth, gave rise to wonderful expectation. Notwithstanding such a combination of good promise, and that she made her first appearance in one of her favourite and best esteemed characters, that of Lady Macbeth, in which she was perfectly suited as to the figure, manner, voice, execution, and judgment, yet the experiment was tried at too late a season of her life; she never drew a *second crowded house*—the bloom was off the peach; and in general (but in Dublin more particularly) an accomplished beauty only can be almost assured of victory; she with merit may slay hearts at will, and, like Bobadil, call twenty into the field of love, kill them; twenty more, kill them too: nay more, in Ireland, a new-born Venus like Mrs. Sullen, may say, "O! a fine woman may do any thing in Dublin!—O my conscience!

science ! she may raise an army of twenty thousand men !”

But I will leave the worthy ancient lady, Mrs. Pritchard, and attend on myself ; who, after the late fracas at Crow-Street Theatre, left the Grecians early in June 1762 ; and when at Chester was induced to lounge there about eight days, and formed an acquaintance with Mr. Daniel Smith and Mrs. Smith, of the White Lion Inn : He was one of the most spirited, friendly, and entertaining characters I ever met with ; hundreds are judges of the individual I am speaking of.—Like other men that have merit he had envious enemies, but they were so overbalanced by friends and great and deserved success, that such opposers made the following line applicable to him.

Their praise was censure, and their censure praise,

He was, on my first intimacy, in his prime of life, of an intrepid manly disposition, strong and happy in health, attended with great liveliness ; not a gentleman of Chester, or the county, but liked Dan Smith as a companion.—To him I owe several acquaintances at Chester, whom I reflect on with pleasure, as well as the many happy days I have had there, for Smith’s house was at all times my home : not that I accepted his favours without a return. His and my intimates were Roger Wilberham, Esq; Mr. Farrington, Mr. Fisher Tench, Mr. Orme, &c. I was so delighted with the first civilities which I experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Smith, that it was actually with the utmost regret I could leave them :—
however,

however, business must be adhered to, and after a mutual promise of a continuance of friendship so agreeably begun, I took my leave, and determined on going to Birmingham, where I had never been, and where my good friends, Mr. Hull and Mr. Younger were as managers for the summer season. I took a post-chaise, and on the second day arrived there to dinner:—It was quite a new scene to me.—The company had acted three or four weeks, and I intended my visit to Mr. Hull for seven or eight days only. Miss Morrison, Mr. Moody, and several performers from London, with whom I was well acquainted, were there:—they wished for my continuance, provided I would accept the terms of the company, which was a share and a benefit: to that I consented. I was not engaged at any other place, and it was particularly agreeable to my own inclination.

On the 28th of June, Alexander was acted:—To which was added, The Minor.—I performed the usual characters.

The following paragraph Mr. Hull put to the bottom of the bill:—

“The company, in order to render their performances as generally agreeable as possible, have engaged Mr. Wilkinson for the ensuing part of the season; who will occasionally entertain the public with several characters in Mr. Foote’s manner, and with various imitations of burlettas, operas, &c. as they have been repeatedly exhibited in London, with universal approbation.”

My

My mother's letter to me at Birmingham.

" MY DEAR TATE,

" YOURS of yesterday makes me extremely
 " happy that you feel no remaining effects
 " from that violent night's overdoing your
 " strength; that you are in favour with the town,
 " and also that you are at this hot time free from
 " hard work in tragedy. I am vastly delighted
 " that you have the pleasure of so fine a country,
 " and with such a multiplicity of engagements
 " with the people in high life: only, as you
 " observe, it is living too well, which I hope will
 " be carried off by fine air and your riding. If
 " you go to Worcester, very possibly you may
 " see Mrs. Hutchinson there, at Mr. Broomley's
 " a man of fortune. If she is not at the races,
 " and you have time, Whitley-Court, at Lord
 " Foley's, is but a few miles, which visit would
 " reinstate you in her favour. As you are so
 " near the spot called Tato Heath, it is very
 " right to think about what inquiries are to be
 " made about it: then in the first place you are
 " to take the advice of some person of good
 " character, eminent in the law, whether your
 " father did not, after his conviction, forfeit all
 " his rights to any thing he had from the Crown?
 " I remember that was Mr. Sharpe's opinion;
 " and if so you can have no claim: but if upon
 " further inquiry you should be better informed,
 " your right as from your father would be very
 " easy to prove at the Duchy-Office. It was the
 " year forty when your father was at Warring-

" ton,

"ton, and all the papers I have relating to the
 "coals were signed by John Baily, who, if alive,
 "could inform you particularly where the coal-
 "pits were.

"How could you be at a loss to know whose
 "kitchen I meant? her ladyship's: who I believe
 "is as much distressed to support that family as
 "ever I was in one far less. Lord Forbes has
 "been dangerously ill; upon which news the
 "Captain set out post for Dublin; and whilst I
 "was there yesterday, letters came from him
 "and Mrs. Wilson of his safe arrival. I most
 "sincerely wish them all happy, but returned
 "home blessing God how much more true ease,
 "content, and satisfaction I and my son enjoy;
 "for really, as far as I can judge, you are now
 "in a round of engagements of all the pleasures
 "this world can give; your way of life here so
 "different, I do not know how you will recon-
 "cile yourself to the change. My desires are
 "contracted in a narrow sphere—a mind in
 "peace, with the decent necessaries of life. I
 "hope by your enlarged acquaintance you may
 "meet with those who will prove real friends,
 "and be of service to you upon many occasions,
 "as your men of fortune carry weight in every
 "way of life. And so to hear of your continued
 "health and spirits will ever give the highest joy
 "to the heart of

"Your most affectionate mother,

"G. WILKINSON."

London, August, 1762.

Wednesday

Wednesday the 25th of August, The Rehearsal
—the first time I ever acted Bayes.

The company was summoned by Mr. Yates to Preston on account of the jubilee, which is kept there with great festivity, and celebrated every twenty-one years:—he had engaged several principal London performers. I returned back to Chester, being eager to see my friend Smith and family, and other new acquaintance at that place; but I made my journey thither a pleasant round, and took Preston in my way: I met Mr. Sowden coming from Ireland on the road, and he turned back and went with me to the Jubilee, and then to stay with me a few days at Chester. At Preston we found very bad accommodations, very dear, very dirty, and much crowded. The procession was tolerable, but not worth the trouble or expence of a journey to see it; indeed I was very glad on the second day to persuade Mr. Sowden to quit Preston for Chester, for it was all confusion and mire, except the main street, which I recollect is spacious and handsome, but it was the crowd and inconveniency that made us glad to depart; and we went from thence to Liverpool, where I had never before been; and after one day's view we crossed in the East Ferry to Cheshire, where we ordered a post-chaise, and got in good time to dinner at Chester.

Mr. Sowden's intimacy with me began the winter before at Mr. Mossop's theatre, where he was a sub-manager at that time. He was a sensible shrewd bred man, looked on in general as remarkably insincere; not that I ever met with any thing from him in any respect, but the opposite

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posite conduct. I once went with him from Dublin to Wicklow (a pleasant ride) to receive some rents there: He was very entertaining, and a great epicure: He was possessed of an ample fortune, the consequence of being a good economist, and well knowing how to lend his money to great advantage, yet not without good security: He made himself generally pleasing, as he never contradicted any body, or disliked any thing at another person's table, but always approved. If a gentleman had said, "Sowden, that cabbage-leaf those strawberries are on is a fine leaf?" he would have sworn a loud oath, that the cabbage-leaf not only was a handsome cabbage-leaf, but, by G—d! the handsomest cabbage-leaf that ever grew." He was father to Mrs. Jackson at Edinburgh, and I believe she only came in for an inconsiderable part of his fortune; but of that Mrs. Jackson is the only competent and proper judge; and I sincerely hope my conjecture may be quite wrong for her sake.

From Chester I went to London, where I had not paid my dutiful respects for several months, and there had a welcome not to be suspected. From thence, for a few nights, I paid a visit on the eve of the peace being settled between France and England, to my brandy company of the old theatre at Portsmouth; the Bath commander had left that place for his regular winter quarters: Ships of war were sailing daily into the harbour to be paid off, consequently money was plenty, and the theatre well filled. I had not visited my friends for a full year, I was therefore a kind of novelty, besides having attained a supply of new characters.

characters. The 20th of October, 1762, I acted Lear, also Bayes, &c. and finished with a crowded benefit and well-pleased theatre. I have often wished once more to walk those ramparts, and take a retrospect of my juvenile part of life, so frequently employed on that spot where I was then so highly gratified with friends, pleasure, and credit; whenever opportunity offers, I will indulge myself for a few days with that trip. From Portsmouth I returned by the road through Salisbury to Bath, where I expected without doubt an engagement; but there my vanity or my hopes, call it which you will, were frustrated as to the theatre. Mr. Arthur thought I asked too much, and I, that he offered too little; in consequence thereof Mr. Simpson of the great rooms obliged me with them to exhibit in; and actually I had, to a jumbled, ill-conducted medley, at 3s. per ticket, not less than 60l. and I was at very little expence. Mr. Fleming leading *gratis*; in short, the night was universally fashionable, and every body was willing to serve me, which easily accounts for any success of that kind however wonderful it may appear. It actually had such general sanction, that the theatre was so deserted as to be obliged to be dismissed for the want of an audience on that evening; an instance perhaps never before or since there, within living memory. I had a second night on Thursday, Dec. 16, and very genteely attended, 35l.; it was much better conducted and approved, and would have been more lucrative had my first been more properly considered.

From

From thence I went to Bristol, where I had never before been, and on Tuesday, February 1st, I had a most brilliant and crowded audience, at the assembly room, in Princess-street. Mr. Fleming assisted me again as leader, and gave his Quaker's Sermon on his violin; for which he was much admired and applauded, and was truly a worthy man, and universally esteemed; he was father to the Miss Flemings now of Bath. I returned the compliment in a small degree by once performing for his benefit at William Wilshire's rooms on the 28th November, 1764, at Bath; but he assisted me twice there, and twice at Bristol.

I was much obliged to the ladies and gentlemen at Bristol for their general patronage, and their kindnesses shewn me on those nights, as except Mr. Church at the White Lion, Broad-street, Bristol, I did not know even the names of three people in that opulent city, my whole time there was entirely confined to Mr. and Mrs. Church. They behaved with great kindness to me, as I was very ill under their care in a fever near three weeks.

To Mr. CHURCH, at BRISTOL.

" SIR,

" As I have not had any letter from my son since Wednesday se'nnight, that he was then ill, I am under great anxiety of mind, concluding he is worse, and if so beg you will let no attendance or advice be wanting; and that
" if

“ if he is not able to write, I beg the favour you
 “ will be so good as send me a line by return of
 “ the post; for if my son is (as I greatly fear)
 “ ill, I will upon your answer set out for Bristol.
 “ I beg you not to fail writing as to a mother
 “ whose earthly happiness is placed in the life
 “ and health of her only child.

“ I am, Sir, your most humble servant,
 “ G. WILKINSON.”

London, Feb. 4, 1763.

“ Please to direct for me Half-moon-street in
 “ the Strand.”

On my recovery, from thence I returned by Bath to London, for a few days recreation, and then set off on an invitation I had received from Mr. Ivory, manager of the Norwich theatre; so there was another new trip. Mr. Hurst (whom I had known in Ireland) was appointed the directing manager, and I believe was the occasion of the offer. Mr. Hurst I had often met in my adventuring (as Garrick termed it) and his behaviour at Norwich was kind and attentive to a degree both as to my profit, when my benefit was to be fixed, and in every other particular. In return I really underwent infinite labour; for he worked me not as an horse of blood, but as an horse for burthens; I even now sink at the very thought of how I drudged and toiled in that theatrical Norwich mine.

On Monday, February 29, 1763, I played Othello; on Saturday, March 5, the Minor. Mr. Bannister, senr. was there, and took his first ideas of mimicry from seeing me play those parts
 in

in the Minor, Cadwallader, and other of Mr. Foote's pieces. My playing in the Minor drew *repeated and increasing* good houses. This may appear as a stretch; but Mr. Dodd was there, to whose services I have been much obliged at York: he was a reigning favourite at that time, and I call on him to vouch, that though the city of Norwich is not the most theatrical town in the kingdom, yet that audience to any piece that is well received will bear a more repeated acting of it than any other town of the size whatever. I think the Padlock was acted twenty-five nights the first season; now, that to be accomplished from its production there with only four plays, or but three in a week, I look upon to be equal to fifty times in London. Norwich season was then five months. I acted Bayes four play nights progressively—Saturday, March 12, Monday 14, Tuesday 15, and Thursday 17. The Rehearsal was much liked, though not calculated for any audience “to pit, box, and gallery it” out of the meridian of London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Bath, or York. Prince Volscius was acted by Mr. Dodd, and the present clever Mr. Bannister played the grave sententious Mr. Smith; the Gentleman Usher, Mr. Weston, who had not then acted in London (and was not in any degree of eminence as a comedian). I do not believe, take it for all in all, that Norwich ever had a better company than that identical season; Mr. Chalmers was there as a comic actor, and I fear I speak truth when I say, I verily believe he was a greater favourite than Weston; he was father to Mr. Chalmers with me at York some seasons, a young

a young man of merit and a very good harlequin.

I will here mention that an adventure of mine, related by Mrs. Bellamy in her sixth volume, relative to Mr. Chalmers the comedian, of Norwich, passing for Wilkinson, the York manager, is no more than strictly true, however vague, romantic, and improbable it may appear to a stranger. I have been often taxed as to its authenticity; but the following persons are still inhabiting this earthly globe, and must remember the transaction mentioned—Sir John Sinclair, Mr. Woods, Mr. Bland, Mr. Moss, Mr. Death, Mr. Beynon, Mrs. Webb, Mr. and Mrs. Charteris, Mrs. Inchbald, and others, were all then at Glasgow, and subscribed to assist the strange Mr. Chalmers at that time. The day I met my friend Socia Wilkinson, at Hollytown, was on Saturday the 16th of April, 1774. But as that matter is not in the least relative to my adventures at Norwich, and lest I should stray until I am bewildered, I will get back to that town, and inform the reader, that after being cordially and partially received in several principal characters, my benefit night there was fixed on Monday, April 11, 1763. I had been lucky to a degree in having the honour to please the inhabitants of Norwich, and almost every part repeated again; also the farces were approved, and Bucks have at ye. All, there was no end to. I played at my benefit, King Lear, and promised to treat all the ladies and gentlemen with TEA, which was seriously taken by the people in general as a contract they expected would be fulfilled: it was thought very expensive,

expensive, and would be attended with much difficulty and trouble; but Mr. Wilkinson was vastly genteel, but then how would he be able to find cups and saucers for such a quantity of people? Why, to be sure, the quality folks were to be served first, then a fresh washing of the china, to be humbly presented to Tom, Mary, Darby, and Joan, in the galleries. What I am describing is more serious than will be supposed credible, and however unlikely, though it is the strangest, it is not the only instance of the kind with which my readers shall hereafter be made acquainted. I have the pleasure to say I was myself much pleased at the very great compliment paid me; as at the usual prices from that time to the present there has not (I have been given to understand) been ten such crowded houses seen at Norwich in the tedious round of twenty-seven years. In short, the town was in a mob at three o'clock in the afternoon, to secure a first seat if possible to see Mr. Wilkinson and drink a Dish of Tea with him. The interlude given that night as Tea, was the same kind of mixed entertainment, consisting chiefly of the imitations of those actors, and the same materials which had been so greatly received in London, Dublin, &c. and with which the reader has been pestered from the first volume of this complex—*what d'ye call it—something—nothing of a book*; for the work will certainly be allowed originality, and that no such hurlo-thrumbo production as to information of jumbled matter and anecdotes ever before appeared! What is more extraordinary than the strange mistake which arose in the peoples' ideas, should not only have been

been taken as seriously offensive at Norwich then, but it actually laid the foundation for fabricating a thousand stories, and Fame increasing as she goes, told the tale with wonderful additions to the children of that time, and remembered by those young ones who then could not lisp; yet they can now relate what their daddies told them of me, (Wilkinson) who promised to give all the town Tea, and behaved so ill, he would not keep his promise, but made a joke of it.

On eagle's wings immortal scandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born and die.

It was soon after my departure circulated, and even put at length into the newspapers (which must be true) that I was obliged to secure my personal safety by flight, that I ordered a post-chaise with four horses, took all the money which had been received that night into a large silk handkerchief, without waiting to count if all was right, and got out of Norwich with all expedition, lest I should have been torn in pieces by the enraged multitude; and when I arrived in London they said Wilkinson laughed at the Norwich flats, and an hundred ridiculous falsehoods of that kind were propagated, and handed carefully down by that generation and piously transmitted to their children. Now the plain matter of fact was no more than by not satisfying them really with the eager expected Tea, the thirst for which was so great that I verily believe had Mr. Garrick been King Lear they would have thought the play had been too long; but when they found no Tea

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they did not relish what I was doing as the way by any means to make them amends for the insult they supposed I had wilfully given to their understandings; but what was more, my likeness of Mr. Barry, Mr. Sparks, or any of the London performers was Greek to them; and it was natural for them not to admire what they could not by any means comprehend. The difference of audiences in such like circumstances is amazing. A farce, if it possesses true humour, in London will be greatly relished and applauded: In the country very possibly the same (even decently acted) shall be termed vile, low, vulgar, and indelicate. The *Love for Love* of Congreve, the *Trip to Scarborough*, the *Way of the World*, the *Confederacy*, and others, are in London attended to as plays of wit and merit, (witness their constant repetition) but in the country not permitted, or if permitted to appear, not upon any account fashionable, which is just as bad.

The same unlucky reception of my *Tea* at Norwich, would happen to the ablest imitator in London, supposing he gave the strongest likenesses of the Edinburgh and York actors; a London audience so tried would feel not only chagrined and disappointed, but would give such tokens of resentment and anger, as would far exceed that of the enraged Norwichers. My farce that night helped to confirm my disgrace; for out of London certainly no one was so very likely to displease as Mr. Foote's Orators, not only quite obsolete but local: let any person now take it up of the age of twenty-five, and it will puzzle the best head to find out or comprehend

how at that time, even in London, an audience could possibly be entertained by it, however well acted. The porter-club, the last scene of the farce, gave it a complete overthrow, though assisted by Mr. Weston; their patience was quite exhausted, and I could barely make a finish. I dare say no lady can feel this account more forcibly than Mrs. Wells; for without being on the spot to judge as a witness, and though surrounded by many friends, and even the royal support of majesty, she found, I dare guess, a material difference between giving her imitations of Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Crawford at Covent-Garden theatre, than before the best collected audience at Cheltenham.

As Peter Paragraph in the Orators that night, I only recollect a few nonsensical lines of Mr. Foote's, not printed, which he always spoke, and occasioned a laugh. The character was drawn as a likeness of Mr. Alderman George Faulkner, an eminent printer, well known in Dublin, for which performance he sued Mr. Foote, and cast him for damages.

When Foote wrote the part he had two legs, but Mr. Faulkner had but one: Foote afterwards sustained the same loss; myself too nearly experienced the same painful and dreadful misfortune: Thank God, not quite so unfortunate. When I was before the judge in the court of justice, as subpoenaed on trial, I related the following additional lines as Peter Paragraph.

Peter Par. An't please your worship, Mrs. Paragraph was as beautiful a woman, and of as good a family as any in all Ireland—her sister

too is a perdigius agreeable woman—she has perhaps one of the finest necks of any lady in all Dublin. I encountered her one morning upon the middle of the stairs—my hand fell accidentally upon her bosom, and I protest and vow, please your worship, it gave me such a *thrill*, I felt it at the bottom of my dead limb.

Second Story as PETER PARAGRAPH.

Peter Par. My wife Mrs. Paragraph, was a perdigius agreeable woman. As we were returning to Ireland, in October, in the year 1739-40, during the autumnal equinox, a violent storm arose, I went down into the cabin unto her, and said Mrs. Paragraph, my dear, answer me one question—Sink or swim, have you been untrue unto my bed? Says that dear woman (by way of reply) My dear,—sink or swim, that secret shall go along with me.—O! she was a perdigius valuable woman!—you might have trusted her with any thing.

At those little jokes I was applauded in Peter Paragraph; but as to the stories circulated, and believed about my running away from conviction of intentional affront from myself, they were too ridiculous to tell, and more so to be credited; what added to the idea of designed insult that night was at the conclusion of my Tea, I gave a Medley which Mr. Garrick himself had wrote for Mr. Beard, and given to me; he designed it first as a compliment to Mr. Beard for his Ranelagh benefit, but after that he altered it for the playhouse.

The lines taken as rude, were the very harmless ones that follow, to a common tune—

Now if you think I'm wrong,
In all I've said or sung,
And wish that poor I had been dumb, dumb, dumb.
Tho' the fish are in the net,
Yet I shall fume and fret,
And though I have caught you be mum, mum, mum.
I therefore beg and pray,
That nothing you will say,
Lest others next year should not come, come, come,
For if like you they're taught,
They'll not like you be caught,
And therefore I pray you all mum, mum, mum.

Their being in an ill humour, and my singing those lines in the medley very gravely, (as I judged a very good joke) they absolutely took seriously, and occasioned all the bustle and nonsense here related, and in resentment they echoed back—*hum, hum, hum*; and it was agreed, *nem. con.* that I intentionally laughed at them.

To speak my thoughts on the matter, I perceived myself much injured by such ill-suspensions and misconstructions on all I had done; and I really had fatigued myself more that night, hoping to please, than almost any one I ever performed before or since; as it was too much even for a stronger constitution than mine.

As I remained on the spot, instead of quitting Norwich, my very extraordinary departure from which I shall immediately give an account of, that must satisfy all who believe or disbelieve to the contrary.

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During my residence there my mother gave me the following account of her ILLNESS, by which it will be perceived, as a son, I did not neglect that precious friend.

“MY DEAR TATE,

“I HAD the pleasure of yours on Tuesday,
 “but was neither able nor willing to inform you
 “that I have been so far gone as to be obliged with
 “great reluctance to have the further advice of
 “an eminent physician:—I am but just begun
 “with his advice; but having done all, I resign
 “myself to the Great Disposer of life or death.—
 “I have had two very friendly visits from Mrs.
 “Batt. Lady Forbes, not very little noticed till
 “this day, two bottles of Madeira, with an offer
 “of any thing in her power. I know her good
 “will would not be wanting.—I pity her, and
 “think her situation more distressed than my
 “own. She offered writing to you, but I said I
 “had wrote, and would again as soon as able.
 “I wondered not at your being heart sick of the
 “Minor; feel glad at this week’s rest, and
 “should be still more happy if you would give
 “way to a few serious thoughts why this is called
 “the *Passion Week*. You will excuse these little
 “hints from one who is ever anxious both
 “for your increasing happiness here and here-
 “after.

“Your most affectionate mother,

“G. WILKINSON.”

London, March 31, 1763.

“ MY DEAR TATE,

“ YOUR affectionate cares and unbounded
 “ offers far exceed what I could ever either expect
 “ or desire. I thank God I have not wanted any
 “ necessary helps; and for your kind fears that I
 “ do not cheer my spirits with eating and drink-
 “ ing, you know I cannot bear two days plenty
 “ without being ill; and I had, as I told you,
 “ dined out every day, which occasioned my
 “ present illness. I am I hope better, but kept
 “ weak by physic. Mrs. Hutchinson sent me a
 “ chicken and six bottles of Bristol water, (re-
 “ freshing draughts). Of what use am I, to
 “ think of a journey to Bath at your expence?
 “ —No, my dear Tate, if I ever consent to that,
 “ you must be there to complete the cure: and
 “ as to accepting your princely offer of 30l. for
 “ the journey, oh! that must be a most desperate
 “ and killing extremity indeed, and could give
 “ no true nourishment whilst feeding so deep
 “ upon what you so industriously slave for: but
 “ above all, the overflowing joy and satisfaction
 “ you give completes the wishes of my soul, in
 “ that serious just sense you express so sufficiently
 “ in few words, of that awful reverence im-
 “ pressed by God upon your mind:—hold there,
 “ and be blessed for ever

“ The expeditious filling your boxes appears
 “ highly in your favour indeed; but that pleasure
 “ seems still to be alloyed by the impossibilities
 “ set forth in your over-worked bill; for after
 “ *Learn* alone I should wish you in a warm bed.

“ Though

" Though a sight of you, even for one night,
 " would rejoice my heart, yet I beg you will rest
 " a night or two; and as your trunk must be
 " much shattered, would have you get a new one,
 " and leave the old one here.

" Having just made a comfortable meal of
 " half a fine sweet bread, with the blessing
 " of God hope to be able to cook and eat
 " with you by the time you talk of seeing
 " again.

" Your ever blessed

" And affectionate mother,

" G. WILKINSON."

London, Apr. 5, 1763.

These short letters, it is true, have no particular connection with the work; but the contents flowed from a pen of such true worth as will render them far from unacceptable to every worthy mind, whether depressed or exalted, as "Nature speaks with most miraculous organs."

My benefit was Monday, April 11;—and on Wednesday the 13th of April I acted Douglas: I also spoke Bucks have at ye All, and performed the usual parts in the Minor. Sufficient duty for one night, well or indifferently manœuvred: for I was threatened with strong marks of resentment, and they were in reality very angry; so I was prepared for, and expected it. Yet I was such a favourite, that when I made my appearance their good nature got the better of their disgust, and I was astonished at receiving my usual good welcome; not a *single mark of disapprobation*. Thursday the 14th I played Mrs. Amlet, and,

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for the first time, Hartop in the Knights; Sir Gregory Gazette, Mr. Weston; Tim, Mr. Dodd. On Saturday the 16th was advertised my last night of playing: I spoke Bucks, and repeated Hartop: The comedy I was not concerned in—it was Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, acted purposely to introduce Mr. Larry Kennedy; and was the only night the manager, Mr. Ivory, had left (as manager): the regular course of benefits beginning the Monday following.

Two offences *more* in the course of the week I was informed I had committed, but indeed very innocently. It was at that time not only the custom there (and a horrid custom it certainly was), but also at York, Hull, &c. &c. for the performer, whether man or woman, to attend the playbill-man round the town, knock humbly at every door honoured with or without a rapper, and supinely and obediently stop at every shop and stall to leave a playbill, and request the favour of Mr. and Mrs. Griskin's company at the benefit. The heroine (if unmarried) was equally responsible for steering her steps—no matter whether the Juliet, the Cleopatra, the Lady Townly, or the Queen Elizabeth: no dignity of any kind allowed for such an omission, without being construed a violation of duty; that severe law of custom then in force must be complied with, or looked on as an infringement of rules and respect, and would incur censure, with the appellation of pride, impudence, insolence, and want of reverence: no matter how severe the weather, if frost, snow, rain, or hail, Jane Shore and the proud Lady Macbeth were expected

expected equally to pay the same homage. If the Lady Turtle Dove was blessed with a loving mate, her attendance was dispensed with, but not otherwise on any pretext whatever; in that case the honour devolved on the husband. These laws (thank God) I had not been accustomed to: and having a plentiful well-supplied pocket had no need to comply, or trouble myself to use such a practice; which I dare say superior minds to my own have, from the dictates of prudence and necessity, against their will too often complied with; and the produce of my house proved such degrading rules were better broke than kept for the credit of the actors. And blessed be the times to say what I relate had better not have been mentioned, but be buried and forgot: But there are those who can vouch to the inglorious and disgraceful truth, and I can boast as being one of the first who relieved my brethren in the country from such slavery.

Another custom was, after the play the performer was to return thanks, and if married, both husband and wife to appear. Mr. Frodsham once at York spoke a comic epilogue on his benefit night, and actually carried his wife (now living) on and off the stage on his back, to comply with the expected homage:—on particular occasions four or five children to make up weight, courtesying and bowing in frocks, had a wonderful effect, as the audience in general, and the ladies in particular, prided themselves upon bestowing their bounty on such a pains-taking man, or such a pains-taking couple as they proved themselves to be. Though I had heard so much of those

customs, yet I was honourably received after all my alleged *ILL-BEHAVIOUR at Norwich*, as usual, with much pleasantry and good humour. The last night of my acting there I made as polite an acknowledgment as lay in my power, and meant what I said, that I really thought myself, as a stranger at Norwich, particularly honoured and obliged; which coming unexpectedly was received with double effect, and I was dismissed with great glory and marks of approbation; and the audience were not a little pleased that I confessed myself indebted to them for the favours they had conferred on me.

Now, after such particulars, it is really astonishing how such falsehoods to the contrary could be propagated and believed from that time 1763, and never cleared up till 1787, when I was last at Norwich, and will be much more so by this faithful account. Another strange custom they had at Norwich, and if abolished it has not been many years, which was for a drummer and a trumpeter (not the King's) in every street to proclaim in an audible voice, having been assisted by his shrill notes to summons each garreteer, without which ceremony the gods would not submit to descend from their heights into the streets to inquire what play was to be acted, nor ascend into the gallery.

A custom of this kind prevailed so far with a Mr. Herbert's Lincolnshire company in the time of our revered, well-remembered, and beloved Marquis of Granby, that when at Grantham the players determined to omit the usual ceremony of the drum, wishing to grow more polite; and by
obstinate

obstinate perseverance, Lady Jane Gray, Mary Queen of Scots, King Henry the Eighth, the King of France, nay even Cardinal Wolsey had no command, attraction, or power over the populace when they lost their accustomed and so much loved sound of the drum and trumpet. The ladies were obstinate, though they could not by all their arts, or by all their charms, obtain a livelihood; and their heroism was so great, that they preferred death, honourable death, rather than submit to slavish terms. The Marquis of Granby sent for the manager of the troop, and said to him, "Mr. Manager, I like a play; I like a player; and *shall be glad to serve you*:— But, my good friend, why are you all so suddenly offended at and averse to the noble sound of a drum?—I like it," said the Marquis, "and all the inhabitants like it: Put my name on your play-bill, provided you drum, *but not otherwise*. Try the effect on to-morrow night; if then you are as thinly attended as you have lately been, shut up your playhouse at once; but if it succeeds, *drum away*." The manager communicated this edict to the princes, princesses, *peers* and *peeresses*; and not only they, but even the *ambitious step-mother*, gave up all self-consideration for the public weal; and it was after some debate voted *nem. con.* in favour of the drum: they deigned to try Lord Granby's suggestion, and to their pleasing astonishment their little theatre was brim-full on the sound of the drum and Lord Granby's name; after which night they row-didi-dow'd away, had a very successful season, and drank flowing bowls to the health of the noble Marquis. They left Grantham

Grantham in great credit, without being drummed out of town, though accompanied by their friend the drummer; and I am told the custom is continued at Grantham to this day. This is a strong proof how difficult it is to surmount prejudices, whether in religion, politics, or even so trivial a matter as the sound of a drum; for rumour has fewer tongues than she has ears.

But, my good reader, observe, I have not yet in my History got from Norwich:—if you will kindly look back to Mr. Kennedy's acting Leon the last night I played there in 1763, I must faithfully inform you, that after all my quarrels, &c. with Mr. Foote, however contradictory to my resolves and Mr. Foote's repeated declarations, he had secretly sent Kennedy to Norwich as an ambassador with credentials; neither more nor less than not only to present articles of peace, but for re-uniting our forces, and to engage Weston for the ensuing summer at the Haymarket. Mr. Kennedy was commissioned to assure me, that Mr. Foote was much concerned for the misunderstandings and mistakes which had subsisted between us for no less than *five years*; that he wished Mr. Kennedy, as an acquaintance and friend of both, would inform me I might depend upon his being serious and honourable in meaning an engagement, which he hoped would prove lasting and advantageous to both; that in many pieces, dividing the parts, would be better for each of us; for however clever he might flatter himself to be from his own opinion and the partiality of the public, he was convinced one person perpetually

perpetually before the audience, be he ever so excellent and meritorious, had not so great an advantage as by a little space ere he was seen again : (a certain good remark for me then, and many young performers now, to remember). His letter added, that he had wrote a part purposely for me in a new farce called *The Mayor of Garratt*, which he should cut out, unless I would consent to perform it;—also a division between us in *Tragedy A-la-Mode*, and that I should play *Hartop* in the *Knights*, and he would act *Sir Gregory*, &c.—He asked what I desired for every night, not only when I acted, but every one that his theatre in the Haymarket was opened; and that I might take my benefit at three weeks notice whenever I pleased in his season, and be allowed to revive or act on that night what I thought proper, and that it should be clear of all expences whatever; and concluded with assuring me, he should not only be heartily and sincerely glad to see me as a performer, but as his particular friend; that his house and table should be always at my service, if I would do him the favour to make it my home whenever not better engaged.—This was a changel and it was flattering, profitable, and reputable.—I instantly made proposals, which were immediately agreed to, by a letter that reached me on my arrival at York, and the first week in June I was to attend the Haymarket theatre.

What made Mr. Foote so very generous, open, and explicit, was, that he judged it would be lucrative to him if he complied as to terms.

So it plainly appears that a war of five years was amicably and honourably concluded, with a peace

peace not inglorious, but equitably adjusted for the advantage of both parties, and from that time not any bickerings or breach of treaties happened between us to the time of his death, in the autumn season 1777.——Peace to his manes ! His entertaining qualities and universality of executive and astonishing genius are too well known, established, and acknowledged, to need any eulogiums from my weak abilities. He was not without virtues, though he had those foibles and faults to which human nature is too subject.—So Foote farewell——

All thy good now blazes,
All thy ill be buried in thy grave.

From Norwich I took a trip to York, where I had never been, and entered into a treaty with Mr. Baker for six nights. Mr. Baker was the gentleman I named as manager of the York theatre, with whom I had previously formed an intimate acquaintance, as before-mentioned, at Mrs. Wier's, in the autumn 1758.

As my Norwich engagement finished on Sunday April the 16th, I intended quitting that place on the Monday morning following; but as I had grown rich, I at that time was wonderfully prudent, and determined on a saving scheme: So I gave up all idea of travelling so far as York, and lolling all the way in a post-chaise. Therefore the only prudent method was to go in the Monday morning's coach as far as Newmarket, but I could not be permitted to take a place for half way, unless they were left empty for want of London passengers;

passengers ; which was and is, I believe, still the constant custom. I was called up early on the Monday morning to be ready for the coach ; but judge my disappointment and chagrin, when on my approach I found it chuck-full, as is often said at the theatre. What was to be done ? A post-chaise I could not think of, on account of the charge :—There was no time allowed for consideration, as all was prepared and ready at the Maid's Head for instant procedure. I determined to leave Norwich most triumphantly, and at an easy expence—two points not always in the power of us mortals—by exalting myself on the coach-box ; a situation I was as unfit for as the undertaking to ride on horses at the Royal Grove :—But previously I had petitioned, reasoned, urged, and intreated, but all to no effect ; I could not make any impresson on the obdurate souls, who, proud and sulky, kept easy and firm possession of their seats, and hardly deigned to answer when I requested permission to be squeezed in, but could not soften their hard hearts : and under the rose be it spoken, no hearts are harder than those of travellers in stage coaches, diligences, &c. and not without some reason ; for if not guarded by hearts of steel, it would, with the conjoined interest of inn-keepers and post-boys, be a perpetual tax upon our good-natures, our convenience, and our pockets, as we should pay for what we did not possess. However, the inside passengers on that occasion called aloud on Mr. Whip to drive on ; so my trunks, &c. were left in the basket, and I was hoisted on the coach-box as the only alternative : but on the first movement of
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the vehicle, if it had not been for the arm of the coachman, I should have been instantly under the wheels in the street, as I had not the least notion how to keep my seat ; therefore the enraged travellers were under the necessity of once more being detained till I was relieved by the help of the hostler and servants of the inn, who were there and fully ready to assist : I was received into their arms from the coach-box, and chucked into the basket as a place of more safety, though not of ease or comfort, where I suffered most severely from the jolting, particularly over the stones ; it was most truly dreadful, and made me suffer almost equal to the sea-sickness I had experienced on board the packet in a storm : however, as I had lived well at Norwich, the coach emetic did me no harm.

The stage coaches then were not hung on springs as they are at present, nor were the roads near so good :—The coach was then double the time in performing the journey. We arrived at Newmarket, where, though I produced myself as an outside passenger, I was permitted the honour of being treated at table as an inside guest ; for they all knew me and pitied my situation, but naturally preferred my suffering some torment, rather than being miserably stowed themselves by cramming the vehicle as if loaded with Norwich turkies at Christmas, and that merely to accommodate a stranger. We of the coach all supped together, separated for bed, wished each other a good night, with pleasant and safe journies to our different destinations ; they to London, myself to cross the country till I got to the great North

North road—On inquiry I was informed a stage crossed from either Ipswich or Bury (I forget which) the next day about twelve, which I determined to wait for ; and I conceived it a matter of pleasing intelligence, for it had a delightful convenience as to the hour of its coming, as it allowed me a long time to rest before it arrived. After I had breakfasted on Tuesday the coach stopped, and from out of it, to my infinite mortification, came no less than six passengers ; therefore I thought of nothing but ringing the bell and having immediate recourse to the agreeable though expensive post-chaise ; but on inquiry one of the persons had only taken a place to Newmarket, in order to be in readiness for the next Norwich coach to London. So after an hour's baiting for the guests and horses, we took possession of the vehicle, proceeded slowly, and arrived about three o'clock at Cambridge ; where finding not any other carriage crossed on to the North road. I sat myself down at the inn (a very indifferent one) and ordered whatever was ready to be produced for my immediate dinner.

While I was regaling over my pigeon pye, &c. a very decent elderly looking kind of man, a farmer, made his appearance, seemingly communicative and intelligent : I asked him questions relative to the distance from Stamford, and what places were best worth seeing at Cambridge. This formed an intimate chat ; and he accepted part of my bottle of port. When I thought of ordering my chaise after a little walk to view the gardens and buildings of the place in a cursory manner,

manner, and taking my leave of the farmer, who had been very attentive to my story, and relating to him my manner of travelling from Norwich to Cambridge, he said after carefully viewing me, that he kept a travelling weekly cart, which he came with from Stamford: He was not fond of trusting strangers, as appearances often were wrong; but, if instead of the expence of a post-chaise, I would accept his horse at a moderate price, and go that night to Huntington, the poor beast was at my service for the journey, and he would himself with my luggage go in his cart, which his man would conduct. I relished the scheme mightily, and judged I was undertaking a Quixote exploit by my attempting to ride a horse sixteen miles. This great matter was that afternoon put in practice, and I set off on my Rosinante and achieved my exploit by actually going the sixteen miles without any danger whatever, and fancied myself a complete horseman; but must observe, what with the delay in point of time, the stopping all night at Huntington, &c. my scheme of œconomy was only visionary, for the etceteras would have been more comfortable and actually less expensive, than the laborious and mean plan I in my wisdom had entered upon. The carrier however honoured me so far with his good opinion, first securing my luggage, that he went off at six in the morning for Stamford, and left me and the horse to take our leisure, having first very kindly invited me to dine with him at Stamford. When I got there I called to see him, and he really expected me as his guest; but that I avoided, sent a porter for my

my luggage, thanked the carrier, and once more became the gentleman at one of the principal inns, waiting for the York coach, with strict orders at night to be called up at five for the purpose of securing a place; but after lounging my lonely day at Stamford, and being summoned to be in readiness for the coach, here my unfortunate stars again pursued me; for lo the coach was full, with three officers and three insignificants. In that bewildered and perplexed state what was to be done? Why, give a strong proof of perseverance, and in defiance of danger, and like a great little soul (for surely it was a meanness) once more throw myself into the arms of my old friend the basket. It was very sharp, windy, cold, disagreeable weather, and the jolting over the stones in every country town in that captive state might be deemed truly dreadful, both as to pain and fatigue. The officers, who in general are polite, friendly, entertaining, and agreeable, soon recognized me, and professed being hurt at my disagreeable situation, but their feelings were not so exquisite and humane, but that laughter evidently was victorious on the occasion; to me jumbling through Grantham was terrible, and equalled to my fancy that of Algerine slavery: yet though I appeared to myself like a vagabond passing by act of parliament from parish to parish, and felt great cold without, I had some amends, by being admitted as one of their own party at every stage, within, or where any refreshments were taken, which was some alleviation to my sorrows, though not satisfactory; for those sorrows, (as too often is the case) were of my own bringing

bringing on ; as foolish indiscretions often give a strong colour to appearances that serve to corroborate as facts, which originate every one of them perhaps from a trivial and undesigned chance that tumbles blunder upon blunder till it forms a something, which if properly known would end like the air-blown bubble of the day.

So was I rightly punished in my journey to York, by undergoing shame, fatigue, and the hazard of my health, while I possessed a plenty to have prevented any one of those vexations ; for I suffered myself to be hoisted from my dog-kennel for two days, stage after stage : but as under the greatest afflictions sometimes a gleam of hope will arise, though soon again to vanish, so in this journey on the first night, the three officers at supper agreed to take a chaise at Ferrybridge, and quit the York road for that of Boroughbridge, and proceed on to Scotland. This gave me great spirits as it insured me an inside place, for my first entrance into the city of York ; where rather than arrive basketed, I would have entered triumphantly in my carriage to breakfast the next day ; but all my hopes were frustrated by a change of their intentions, and on they would go to York as their places were taken. So far the reader may suppose I am not adhering to truth, when I mention we were two days in going from Stamford to York ; but in the year 1763, the roads were so bad at particular seasons of the year, that they were for want of proper forming almost impassable ; and it has been known in the winter to have been eight or ten days journey from York to London. At that

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time it was not so familiar as it now is for ladies and gentlemen to fly like air-balloons, from the farthest points of east and west, and from north to south. For a lady now thinks not of hardship but of pleasure, when she equips herself *en militaire* for a voyage to the East Indies, either with a husband or for a husband. There is not at present half the preparation to quit Yorkshire for a few weeks and trip to Paris, as there was sixty years ago, to go only from York to London. Cibber's John Moody gives an excellent description of that matter. Fathers and mothers, then, made their wills ere they set forward; and the leaving a darling pet son either at York or London, to learn politeness, education, and good manners, not forgetting the fashions, were matters that required more than common fortitude. In short, two hundred miles, in this enlightened age, is no more considered as a journey, than formerly to dine at Windsor from London was; which could hardly be done with the assistance of four horses, and a moon-light morning.

The old saying at London, amongst servants, was, "I wish you were at York!" which the enraged female cook now has changed for, "I wish you were at Jamaica!" Scotland was then imagined by the Cockney as a dreary place, distant almost as the West Indies: now an agreeable party may with the utmost ease dine early in the week in Grosvenor-Square, and without discomposure set down at table on Saturday or Sunday in the New-Town of Edinburgh.—So did I attain the journey in the basket in severe weather, and jolting till the coach stopped at Ferrybridge, when

when to my joy and great comfort the officers took chaise, and I got into (as I at that moment thought) the most elegant, delightful carriage I ever stepped into in my life. I arrived safe at York, and supped with Mr. Baker. That worthy man received me like a parent, would not suffer me to be at an inn or hire a lodging, but yielded up his own convenience of a bed-chamber for a very inconvenient situation in point of comparison; and unless I ordered what I liked for dinner the family might have been starved, the old gentleman was so very attentive and earnest to make it pleasant to his young guest.

Saturday, April 23, 1763, *Romeo and Juliet*, with the Frenchified Lady never in Paris, was plastered on the walls, for the benefit of Mr. Buck. This year was the first Spring Meeting that ever had been attempted at York. It did something as to resort of company, but the year after it sunk entirely, and was not again revived till within a few years back; at present it seems to promise a lasting establishment.

My first appearance was on Saturday, April the 30th, in the Minor, which was acted after Richard III.; and on Tuesday, May the 3d, for the second time, after the Busy Body—Marplot Mr. Frodsham: I was well received by a very genteel house. The ladies of York, without any compliment, have a grace, a manner, a decorum, not often met with out of the metropolis (Bath excepted); for York certainly boasts a pre-eminence, when the boxes on public weeks are crowded, that dazzles the eyes of a stranger; and

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no wonder, for as London and Bath culls the choicest beauties from the three kingdoms, so does ancient York city at times, allure them from Hull, Leeds, Doncaster, Wakefield, Pontefract, and every part of that noble, spacious and rich county. And I am free to declare, that the ladies of York (in my judgment) never shew themselves to such advantage as when they fill the boxes of the York theatre; and for the sake of a person that shall be nameless, I should be happy in having the honour of seeing it so graced and enlivened much oftener than it is.

My next appearance was in Cadwallader—Mrs. Cadwallader, by Miss Phillips, my old acquaintance in Dublin in 1758. Miss Phillips was when I first acted at York in great esteem with many genteel persons; and she was so kind as to assure all her acquaintance that I was no impostor, but the true Don Philip, she having played for Mr. Wilkinson's benefit in Dublin, when the pit and boxes were thrown together. If that favourable information was not of real service, it was meant well, and could do no harm; but indeed I may affirm it deserves even now an acknowledgment for her good report, though *she hears it not, nor sees it not*. She meant well—who can do more?

Miss Warnford was then at York, who was a kind of patroness to her; and I believe to her fair account of me to that lady, I must set down myself a considerable debtor to Miss Phillips. Miss Warnford has been many years married to Mr. Sitwell, a gentleman of large fortune, whose integrity and good qualities are so generally known,

known, as to render any panegyric impertinent; but the ever constant and benevolent acts of friendship I have experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Sitwell, would sink me into ingratitude did I not thus present my small tribute to their worth, and sincerely assure them how much I esteem myself honoured and obliged.

My third character was Bayes, in the Rehearsal, which was judged a service of danger, Mr. Frodsham, being esteemed capital in the part; but there opinion was wrong, for I had been so familiarized to that kind of playing, and was so much better stage acquainted, that I obtained a complete victory in spite of partiality, which in general is obstinate; yet must be allowed often praise-worthy. Indeed Mr. Frodsham was totally unfit for that character, and his friends as well as the rest of the audience would have found that out, had not five out of six subscribed to whatever he did was quite right, without even consulting their own judgments. I repeated the Minor, on Saturday; and on Wednesday the 11th of May, I acted King Lear, and Frodsham, Edgar; in the mad scenes he was the best I have seen, though I remember poor Reddish whilst I am relating it. My Lear was greatly received as it did not interfere with their darling Frodsham, and both being in the same play gave much satisfaction.

Saturday, May 14, the Fair Penitent—Horatio, Mr. Wilkinson; Lothario, Mr. Frodsham; and the Minor.—Tuesday, May 17, 1763, the season finished for my benefit, with the Jealous Wife, and Duke and no Duke.—I acted Oak-

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ley and Trappolin ; but depended on the success of my never failing Tea as to attraction.— I was favoured with a crowded audience, both before and behind the curtain ; for the stage was filled with gentlemen* ; but my Tea scalded their mouths, and though they were not ready to set the hue and cry after me, as at Norwich, yet they grumbled much, and the next day I heard of nothing but what a shame it was to have made Mr. Wilkinson so fine a benefit, and in return he only *laughed* at and insulted them with *hum, hum, hum*. In short, it was evident in the opinion of every body, I only sneered at the York audience, and that it was little better than picking their pockets, and a great deal more and worse ; for slander is told readily, and swallowed glibly—

Slander,

Whose edge is sharper than the sword ; whose tongue
 Out venoms all the worms of Nile ; whose breath
 Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
 All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,
 Maids, matrons ; nay, the secrets of the grave
 This viperous Slander enters.—

This was certainly irksome, but patience ever was my badge, and what I had done deserved praise, though they had not done me justice ; for as I had gained laurels by my endeavours, and dint of hard labour, for which though I own I got money, and in that material point was well satisfied, yet all my glories withered, and every

* At that time admittance behind the scenes was allowed, not only at benefits, but in general to the gentlemen who frequented the boxes.

wreath was torn from my brow : so, instead of a triumphal exit, mine was certainly a degraded one : however my pocket was full, my health was good, and my spirits were great, and not aided, but rather lessened by too much of the grape ; therefore a fig for care !

After my northern expedition I had twelve or fourteen days to spare for relaxation, so I pocketed my affronts, and proceeded to see my friend Daniel Smith, at Chester, where I drank the health of all my York friends, not in Tea, but over a bottle (perhaps two or three) of claret, with Mr. Wilberham, and several others of that place, and a very happy visit it was to me, though not without fatigue ; for what we generally term pleasure, by a mistaken use of the idea, is perverted too often to the contrary effect, by not letting reason give it its boundaries : however I recollected business must be attended to, as without the means I well knew pleasure and friends would be very distant ; for independence creates complacency, and eagerness to please, which dependance in a few days destroys. So I veered about like the weather-cock, from west to south, to visit once more my native home, old London city, “ where every one is witty, and all the streets are paved with gold,” and to renew my acquaintance with my *new* old intimate Mr. Foote, whom I had not spoke to for some years.

When I arrived at my lodgings, I need not repeat the anxious mother was not only rejoiced, but almost speechless to see her son, after an absence of several months, and the more so on
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account of her late illness, before related by letters to Norwich, &c. After a few days solace on my own spot of birth, parentage, and education, I paid my devoirs to the manager at the Hay-Market theatre, where I found Mr. Foote earnestly employed in a work of training his militia company to prepare for a summer campaign. He soon espied me in the orchestra, where I had observingly placed myself; the Rehearsal was soon finished, I mounted the stage, and after a most friendly greeting, to the astonishment of every one, the most amazing coalition of intimacy made its wonderful appearance, and equalled any change politics had ever presented to view. The troop was mute, glad, but more surprised when the carriage was ordered, and Mr. Foote insisted on my dining with him that day, as a large party of the first persons were to be at his table. I did not expect such civility; but it may easily be supposed I could not resist. It also seemed to augur an intention of good will at least; and if not, a good dinner, good company, and Mr. Foote at the head of the table, few persons even of rank would have disliked; besides it placed me not only on a footing of superiority, but prevented any suspicion in myself, as to ill-treatment from Mr. Foote, of which I had not entirely divested my mind. He was then preparing his Mayor of Garratt, in which piece he had wrote a part, he informed me, that was in fact abstracted from the piece, and that he could do with or without it. It was impossible for himself to do it; for with a false belly for his intended Major Surgeon, and to undress for

Matthew Mug, it was not practicable. The part was entitled Peter Primmer, intended as a stroke of satire levelled at Mr. Sheridan, senr. who about that time had busied himself much with delivering lectures on oratory, and proposing a plan for the establishment of an academy, for the teaching of pupils the true art of public speaking.

Mr. Foote mentioned our appearing together in the piece of the Minor: for said he, the public will be better pleased with having both than one; and added, however partial the town might be to him as author and actor combined, yet the same person being perpetually in sight is cloying; and indeed I have often thought that admirable character of Othello, would be better for the actor if not so incessantly in sight; more pity and less fatigue to the performer would have been the consequence, had Shakspeare so contrived; but his writings are so noble, wonderful, and natural, that I do not approve of the liberty I have taken, but will remove my remark more strongly upon my favourite character of Zanga; which is finely drawn, and a charming part for the actor, but is much hurt by his beginning and ending almost every act of the play; and though it must be granted the poetry is fine, yet as it owes its beauties to the production of art, not that of nature, it makes the Revenge a heavy, laborious, tiresome play, though Alonzo, Carlos, Zanga, and Leonora, are all good parts for the performers; Zanga particularly so.

Well, I must return to Mr. Foote, with whom I dined, and it was agreed, the Minor should be

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the opening piece, early in June, 1763: Shift and Squintum, Mr. Wilkinson;—Mrs. Cole and Smirk, Mr. Foote;—with the new farce of the Mayor of Garratt. My Shift, with the imitations, was extravagantly well received, and was repeated several nights.—The Mayor of Garratt had great success, and a run of almost every night in the season; it met with some opposition, which in general only gives a whet to the appetite of those who chuse to approve and support.

Peter Primmer, I dressed with an old tye-wig, like the Barber's in the Upholsterer, a long band neckcloth, a large rod in my right hand, and a Scotch-plaid night gown, and had six boys with primmers and rods, and six girls with horn-books, as my attendants in procession, as the candidate for being chosen Mayor of Garratt. My likeness was strong, and it was well taken; and as a schoolmaster at Garratt near Wandsworth, the dress was ridiculous, and not totally improper; but as a resemblance of Mr. Sheridan, who always appeared at his lecture, and every where as a gentleman, my being *too comical* destroyed the effect; therefore it was judged much better to answer the purpose intended, to dress it in black, and a bag-wig, &c. That alteration gave the people a strong conception of him they knew; whereas the ridiculous wig and gown destroyed every part of the imitation by the absurd appearance. The part I have entirely forgot, and only remember it concluded with my speaking the following verses, as an ode from the old hornpipe song of Nancy Dawson.

Of all the girls in our town,
The black, the fair, the red, the brown,
That dance and prance it up and down,
There's none like Nancy Dawson.

Her easy mien, her shapes so neat,
She soots, she trips, she looks so sweet,
Her every motion is complete;
I die for Nancy Dawson.

See ! how she comes to give surprise,
With joy and pleasure in her eyes,
To give delight she always tries;
O Charming Nancy Dawson, &c.

The above song spoken seriously, with exact tone and manner, had an admirable force on the risibility of the well-pleased audience.

Mentioning my mock ode, as Peter Primmer will not let me omit, what at present gives me great pleasure, from the lately seeing and hearing

Mrs. ESTEN recite that excellent composition, Collins's Ode on the Passions.—But as her stage performances cannot with the least degree of propriety be here inserted to accord with my proposed plan : and as the actors and actresses of the York theatre, will make an appearance in print hereafter, with their regular progression, also the London, and other performers, &c. &c. I will, by way of a Sandwich, halt for a few minutes refreshment, and present the reader with *our York Woodfall's* opinion, relative to the high promise to the public at large, from that Lady's pleasing and extensive abilities. After an Enlogium on her representation of Monimia and Rosalind, he says—" of her delivery of Collins's Ode on the Passions

Passions we know not how to speak, it was so truly perfect. We have heard it given before from a performer on the York stage with unusual effect; by *ONE we are certain Mrs. ESTEN has observed.* We do not hesitate to present our readers with the following elegant lines from the pen of a gentleman, to whom the WORLD is indebted for many masterly effusions, and whose sentiments may justly be applied to Mrs. Esten.

BENEATH a sad and silent shade,
 Afflicted POETRY was laid;
 The shepherd train, the virgin choir,
 No longer listened to her lyre;
 But all neglected and alone,
 Her feeling and her fire were gone;
 No Zephyr fondly su'd her breast,
 No Nightingale came there to rest;
 The fading visions fled her eyes;
 The visions of her extacies:
 And if perchance she sought delight,
 It was amid the gloom of night;
 It was to hear the screech-owl's cry,
 Or whistling whirlwinds rend the sky;
 To pour her melancholy strain,
 And catch a pleasure from the pain.
 ESTEN beheld her haggard air,
 At twilight as she wander'd there,
 And felt the sympathetic wage
 That Taste and Genius ever know.
 Then eager sought the City's throng,
 To vindicate the force of Song—
 She chose an Ode divinely wild,
 Wrote by the Muse's fav'rite child;
 From COLLINS was the magic lay,
 That subject passions all obey.
 The Crowd a varying influence prove
 Of Rage, and Hope, and Fear, and Love.

And still implor'd him to rehearse,
 And own'd the thrilling pow'r of Verse.
 O, thou, sweet Bard! who now may'st be
 A shadow fleeting o'er the sea,
 A vapour on the morning rose,
 A whisp'ring wind at ev'ning's close;—
 Or if thy spirit love to dwell
 A while within the vi'let's bell
 Then in beatitude of change,
 From star to star exulting range,
 Live in the lustre of the day,
 Or float upon the lunar ray;
 Or rapt'rous join the hallow'd voice.
 Where endless Seraphim rejoice.
 O! COLLINS? whatsoe'er thou art,
 Deign, deign to bless thy ESTEN's heart!
 A portion of those joys reveal,
 Which sure she well deserves to feel!

“Of the person of Mrs. ESTEN we will venture to say, that it is truly captivating; that she is happy in the disposition of it, ALL must acknowledge; blessed with a set of features uncommonly lovely and expressive; a voice at once powerful and plaintive, cheerful and mellow: her merit, as far as we are able to judge from what we have hitherto seen, is nearly equal in the grave and in the gay—and yet, *wonderful to relate!* with all these perfections she is scarcely known in London, and, as we are informed, not even engaged there.”

Mr. Foote all that season continued every act of civility in his power; his table was my constant resort (when not engaged) either at South End, or at his lodgings in town; for the Hay-Market theatre,

theatre, then, was on a smaller scale, and the dwelling house in Suffolk-street, did not appear as now to the theatre. I supposed he judged it his interest to be on terms, and I was superior to any ill treatment, being in fact the richest man of the two: I was getting money perpetually, did not owe a shilling, and was in possession of some hundreds, therefore was an independent gentleman. Mr. Foote now and then got a great deal of money, which was soon expended; the theatre only by permission from the Lord Chamberlain during pleasure, and he owed many hundreds; nay, even at last, I am afraid, I relate a truth when I affirm, his funeral was at Mr. Jewell's expence; for notwithstanding his income from Mr. Colman was not less than sixteen hundred a-year, besides profits on the nights he acted, yet I have been informed he had not effects by any means equal to the payment of his debts. It shocks me to have related an account of so many stage struck geniuses of birth and talents, that have fallen a sacrifice to grinning poverty, and incurred neglect and ignominy with great incomes. Pray God to allot me a more fortunate *finale*, be its statement appointed for a longer or a shorter date.

But to proceed with a more particular account of our Haymarket sessions.—I gained ground with the audience weekly:—my benefit was fixed on the 20th of August, on which night I revived the Rehearsal, and acted Bayes—the house overflowed from every part—no such receipt the whole season. Mr. Garrick was in Italy, and had not acted.

ed Bayes for some years.—My imitation of Holland in the following lines——

How strange a captive am I grown of late ?

Shall I accuse my love ? or blame my fate ?

My love I cannot : That is too divine !

And against fate what mortal dares repine ?

had such a sudden effect, that Mr. Churchill who sat in a balcony with the late Lucy Cooper, after laughing to a very violent degree, most vociferously encored the speech, which was echoed by the whole voice of the theatre, and complied with by me of course with great pleasure. Mr. Churchill said, that he was convinced I was not a mimic's mimic, for the imitations were palpably my own.—He also encored my mock hornpipe, which was a resemblance of the manner of stage-dancing. The whole play went off with universal satisfaction, and I was highly delighted. Mr. Foote that night was not pleased, but rather chagrined at my good fortune :—these things will happen, and stage minds in general are sooner irritated and hurt than any other set of peoples'; but a theatre is the temple of Vanity, and Vanity and Envy are its constant residents.

The farce on my benefit was the Mayor of Garratt, in which Mr. Foote of course played his Major Sturgeon.

Mr. Mendez, a Jew and an appraiser in Bow-street, was the treasurer that season : On his benefit he requested me to repeat the character of Bayes, which entreaty I granted :—he had a full
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house, and the comedy received additional credit. I had very near been deprived of the play, as Mr. Foote's theatre at that time merely consisted of a few trumpery scenes, no wardrobe but such as was hired from Mr. Barber's in Monmouth-street: and as to stage properties, they were less known there than in the most distant rustic company that scoured the country round. I was quite out of favour at Drury-Lane, so had no hopes of assistance from that quarter: but Mrs. Rich, on application being made to her, supplied me with thunder, lightning, earth, moon, and sun; also sent to my aid a full troop of horse: they had been well trained, were very quiet, and of a great age; were never turbulent, though sometimes troubled with headstrong wanton riders. It was a custom for the gentleman and his lady, who were proprietors of the Haymarket theatre, to reserve a box for themselves, of which they kept the key. I sent a card the week of my benefit requesting the favour of that box, as all the others were disposed of: A very rude refusal was sent back; at which time Mr. Ruspini, now of Pall-Mall, and some gentlemen were with me, and complaining of not being able to procure any box whatever. On my receiving an uncivil answer, I said, "Damn this Mrs. Proprietor! it would serve her ill-natured spleen right to break open the door and fill the box." The hint was no sooner given than seriously taken and put into practice; for as soon as the doors were opened a large party paid, and finding every place was taken, except the Proprietor's, which the box-keeper assured them could not be opened on any pretext whatever, they unanimously burst

burst the old lock and filled the whole box, nor had the turnkey of the Recess rhetoric sufficient to have the least effect, for expostulation did not signify; so they remained sole masters, and sat in triumph till near seven, when the play was going to begin; at which instant up came a limb of the law, no less a personage than Mr. George Garrick, escorting the Lady Proprietress with a large party *gratis*, who summoned the garrison to surrender and be treated as prisoners of war; but they were as obstinate as Turks, and determined to defend the citadel sword in hand. The Lady Proprietress was astonished at the rudeness committed, and insisted on her privileged right; then tried angry and soothing words; but neither her persuasive eloquence nor the authority of Mr. George Garrick, aided by John Doe and Richard Roe of Westminster-Hall, with all their united prowess, could by any means avail. The possessors of the inside works defended their intrenchment from any breach, and they only in exultation laughed, and told Geo. Garrick if himself and party would pay a crown per head they should be admitted, not otherwise. It cannot be imagined that it was an easy matter to extract coin from a lawyer's pocket, consequently the Lady, George Garrick, and party, finding it ineffectual by staying in the box passage, retreated in disgrace, but denounced vengeance on Wilkinson. For my own part I chuckled at the adventure, not so much for the trifling pecuniary advantage I had gained, but at that time I should have disliked the curious Garrick's party *gratis* over my head more than any other. Next day the enraged lady waited

waited on Mr. Foote (who loved mischief and despised his landlady), where she gave an ample scope to her anger, and repeated her wrongs : but Mr. Foote told her it was impossible to prevent what had happened ; as to the improper conduct respecting the box, he could only say he was sorry for her disappointment ; and as to Mr. Wilkinson's rudeness he wished to excuse it, but he had not sufficient authority to whip him for his fault, and there the matter rested, ending evidently to my advantage ; for I must mention that the year following the lady herself sent permission for me to let her box to any particular friend of mine, if the boxes were so taken as to make such permission necessary on my benefit night.

Early in September (as is customary), on the approach of the royal theatres opening, we finished our summer's campaign, which ended gloriously, not a little aided by the assistance of our militia Major Sturgeon.

The night of my departure, when I went to receive my blessing and take leave of my mother, she had sunk her spirits so low with the strong prognostic of her departing from this life, that she had been obliged to retire to bed ; and her feelings were so affectionately strong, she could only embrace, kiss, and bedew me with her tears, and inarticulately say, " O Tate ! my dear son ! I shall never see you more." Her words were indeed truly prophetic, and from that awful and distressing moment—I will relieve my reader and myself from the sensation which must occur—I departed heavily, but got into the carriage and proceeded

proceeded immediately for proud Salop, known better by the title of Shrewsbury.

Mr. Whitley was manager of that company, and a man well known as an extraordinary character of oddity and rudeness in his traffic with actors and actresses for his imaginary dominions, which domains were here to-day and gone to-morrow. At that place the facetious, the witty, the generous, the good Chace Price, of revered memory to all who knew him, was appointed commander of the Shropshire militia, which had not been embodied (as I was informed) during the whole war which had then providentially ceased, till the month of Oct. 1763, owing to some dispute and disgust with the inhabitants of that county, who had universally judged their young men ill-used, as they had some years before this mentioned period thought themselves highly injured by government, as they had raised a regiment for home defence, trusting on that pledge of honour which was broke in a cruel manner, as they were marched off to the sea coast, were there surprised, forced on board transports, and sent to the Indies, and all spoken of as creditable farmers sons.— That obstacle, as the stories of the day went, was given as the reason why the Shropshire regiment had not been raised in common with those of the other counties, and all these difficulties had not been overcome till October 1763. Shrewsbury, to all who know that spot, I need not say is surrounded by a most pleasing country :— Captain Plume speaks well of it in the Recruiting Officer, and the Raven Inn or Tavern therein mentioned I believe to this day is the favourite and fashionable

able house of resort. I acted in that town with Mr. Whitley's company six or seven nights for a clear benefit, which was my first point for striking at, and it proved very lucrative; but I ever worked like a horse at a mill to deserve my engagement, whether in town or country. My benefit was appointed, at my desire, on Monday, October 3. That day I beg the reader will notice was the first day of the militia's assembling, and what was really extraordinary, happened on the annual fair for cattle at Shrewsbury; and it is no more strange than true that they were to assemble in the market-place. The clouds approved it not, for it was as dreadful and rainy a morning as ever poured upon the earth; the pavement rattled with the bursts of heavy rain and hail, accompanied with thunder and lightning. The officers judged it prudent to file off, and the young cackling recruits from instinct followed at the very time the oxen, cows, sheep, horses, &c. were mustering for the fair, and with the variety of collected captains, serjeants, country bumpkins, &c. it occasioned an uncommon tumult, noise, and distress to those concerned without doors, but to the spectators who were so happy as to possess a warm room with a good casement, it afforded a very whimsical morning's view, from the apparent ridiculous distress of the various parties interwoven of men and beasts, &c. as the oxen ran helter skelter amidst the soldiers, populace, &c.—My benefit bill of that night was nearly as follows:

The

The last night, Monday, October 3, 1763, The Rehearsal: Bayes, Mr. Wilkinson. End of the play, by *particular desire*, the principal scene from the new farce called The Mayor of Garratt; the character of Major Sturgeon (of the Westminster militia) by Mr. Wilkinson: also a scene from the Orators; Peter Paragraph, by Mr. Wilkinson; with the farce of the Citizen: Young Philpot, Mr. Wilkinson.—Surely I gave them enough for their money, whatever it might want in quality. The house was crowded in every part, particularly the stage, by gentlemen for want of room in the front of the house: The officers of the new militia were all there, and at their head the ever-entertaining Chace Price, whom I rejoiced to see: he had sent me a compliment at noon (being my benefit); and was between the acts in great spirits, chatting with me and others. At the end of the comedy of the Rehearsal he desired to wish Mr. Bayes good night, as he found himself much fatigued with his journey, and expected a severe bout the next day with the bottle at the mess where he was president; he said he would get a good night's rest, having travelled from London to Shrewsbury without going to bed. On his departure I retired to dress for the new part of Major Sturgeon (the reader will observe that farce was not then in print.) On my appearance behind the scenes as the Major, I thought the countenances of several of the officers did not augur a pleasing aspect to my intended performance; but not supposing any violent anger could possibly arise without a sufficient cause,

cause, hoped I should be made ample amends, by the smiling faces and laughing cheeks in front of the theatre. But the new commanders not having been at that juncture in London, when Mr. Foote's Mayor of Garratt was acting, they knew nothing of its fashionable ton there, or if they did, would not allow that as a sufficient plea for them as men of valour, why they should not resent an injurious affront, from what they looked on as an unjustifiable and intentional insult; they therefore one and all pressed so hard and close together at the first wing where I was to make my entrance, as to prevent the possibility of gaining admittance on the stage; and had not Roger the Bumpkin, servant to the Justice, Sir Jacob Jollup, cried out on the stage, "Pray ye gentlemen, pray ye, let Major Fish come to visit my master," they actually would not have suffered me to pass; but from conscious shame, and the hissing of the audience, I was at last (but not without much difficulty) permitted to enter; and I verily believe had they not so pointedly marked their indignation, the bulk of the hearers would have passed the secret over as incomprehensible; but such a remarkable and violent contempt offered to me was easily perceived by them, and once conceived, their ideas swiftly communicated like gunpowder, when I came to the passage where Major Sturgeon relates to the Justice——

"On we marched, the men all in high spirits,
"to attack the gibbet where Gardel is hanging;
"but turning down a narrow lane to the left,
"as it might be about there, in order to possess
"a pig's

“a pig’s sty, that we might take the gallows
 “in flank, and at all events secure a retreat,
 “who should come by but a drove of fat oxen
 “for Smithfield. The drums beat in the front,
 “the dogs barked in the rear, the oxen set up a
 “gallop, on they came thundering upon us,
 “broke through our ranks in an instant, and
 “threw the whole corps into confusion.”

Now reader, consider, that however *outré* and ridiculous this speech from fancy was formed, by the author Mr. Foote, the whole circumstance had in similarity happened that very day in every ludicrous point; and in consequence, the offended party swore, that particular passage must be the offspring of my own brain, and done as an impudent and intentional disgrace to them; and when the tumult of laughter from the audience allowed permission for me to proceed with — The Major’s horse took
 “fright, away he scoured over the heath. That
 “gallant commander stuck both his spurs into
 “the flank, and for some time held by his mane;
 “but in crossing a ditch, the horse reared up
 “his head, gave the Major a dowse in the
 “chops, and threw that gallant commander
 “into a ditch near the Powder Mills.”

The officers were incensed to such a degree that they left the theatre in dudgeon, vowing vengeance. When I was undressed, and prepared to go to my own lodgings, I had information that a serjeant with five or six soldiers were in waiting with orders, not only to beat unmercifully, but to duck poor Major Sturgeon in the river: so instead of being lighted home,

I acted

I acted as servant after all my fatigue, and lighted others. I got to a house where Mrs. Price and a Mrs. Lewis lived, and ordered the account of the house to be brought there and settled. Mr. Littlehale, a friend of mine, well known at Shrewsbury, was there. He was also intimate with Chace Price, Sir Francis Delaval, &c. Dame Price (my tragedy queen at Portsmouth, in 1757) escorted us up stairs, the kitchen had an entrance on each side of the house. She had undertaken as my old acquaintance to look well to my playhouse doors, and with an observant eye mind, all was honour bright, where that tempting situation of taking money was transacted, that essential article for real kings, queens, generals, fine gentlemen, and fine ladies; for be it known, there is as much anxiety and suspicion on a benefit night at the Theatre Royal, as there is on a security to be as well guarded as the Bank of England, when threatened with conflagration and a riot. Any gentleman who holds half an hour's noon-conversation with an actor in the country, must have observed the following remarks and answers—*The house on such a night was not well counted.—Such a night the house was not well gathered.—The checks were not right.—One of the door-keepers was seen to let up several without taking any money.—Another door-keeper took six shillings; but returned two to prove his honesty.*

These sayings are often without foundation, but I am afraid at times are known to be too true. So Mrs. Price's inspection into the deeds of the door-keepers, with thinking eyes, was truly

truly necessary; but Mr. Littlehale and I, had not regaled an hour before every window below stairs were suddenly broke. The militia officers, at the head of some myrmidons, rushed into the house, and furiously demanded Wilkinson; being assured I neither lodged or visited there, they retired eagerly through the opposite door of the kitchen in determined search of their destined prey, having been at my lodgings first. However on their departure, I had that great restorative elixir, those golden drops, as Major O'Flaherty says, which healed all my grievances; for out of an old crazy tin, and some wooden boxes, I poured a plentiful libation of gold and silver coin, the produce of Mexico and Peru, which presented as charming a lava as can be conceived, for a *quantum sufficit* will make *black* WHITE; FAIR, *faul*; *wrong*, RIGHT; *base*, NOBLE; OLD, *young*; and a *coward*, VALIANT.

After my incredible fatigues and a comfortable bowl, I got safely to rest, and late the next day attended my good friend Chace Price: He declared he saw me with the utmost regret and chagrin, lamented his early departure from the theatre, as had he staid he would have effectually put a stop to such brutish outrage; hoped I would think no more of it: If I imagined, he said, that the officers bespeaking a play with his name at the head would be of service, he would exert all his interest. I told him the accidental affray the night before dwelt on my mind with very disagreeable reflections, as the consequence might have proved dangerous:

As

As to the play the next night, I desired it might be understood I had no advantage from it, nor would I receive any; but as it would certainly serve the company, I accepted it so far as a compliment, and my services that evening he might command. He replied, "he was obliged to me," and ordered the players to perform the Recruiting Officer, as the scene lay at Shrewsbury, and desired I would repeat Young Philpot in the Citizen: He appointed Thursday instead of Wednesday; as on the Wednesday, he had a venison dinner, and devoted the day to his friends, amongst which number he honoured me, and insisted on my dining with him at the Raven on that occasion. I made my compliments in return, and assured him I would attend his summons with infinite pleasure. I was on that day a little after my time, a fault I have been often told of; but on his left hand, at the upper end of the table, the head seat had been purposely reserved for me, and the apparent intimacy and respect he honoured me with, made the officers stare and think they were in the wrong box, by the contempt they wished to have shewn the player. The dinner was good; the wine was good; but Chace Price was superior to both. Mirth went round, enjoying the feast of friendship, and the flow of soul. Singing was mentioned; Chace Price said humorously he must first have a rehearsal; for as his friend Wilkinson was going to leave Shrewsbury in a few days, without one he should be imperfect and forget his part, and begged the favour of me to repeat his favourite scene from

from the new farce of the Mayor of Garratt, and if I would act the Major, he was certain he could recollect Sir Jacob Jollup, as he had seen it that summer in London so often; which was strictly true. His memory was excellent, and he was frequently at Foote's, and was the only man of true wit I ever heard Foote allow to be so, or laugh with and listen to with pleasure; nay, Foote actually praised Chace Price behind his back.

Well, we acted the scene, which was highly relished. The good humoured intention was smothered, and it ended with an afternoon, and evening all in perpetual harmony; animosity or discord was no more thought of. I believe the R— H—, then in the militia, is the gentleman, who of late years has changed red for black, and has been enlisting recruits for another world, as an eminent orator, since his altering his theatrical attendance for that of the tabernacle. Whether he has been the saving of many poor souls or the contrary, will be one day determined.—Methodists are numerous, therefore there will be no want of witnesses. God bless and forgive that sect say I; but fear they will not be so charitable as ever to return me the compliment, as I never observed humanity in their creed.

The officers came to the play on the Thursday; I dined once more at the Raven, and on the Saturday left Shrewsbury, for my favourite old city of Chester, where I made a stay of fourteen days. I had received pressing invitations from Mr. Barry; and at the expiration

of my Chester visit, set off for Holyhead, once more to visit dear Dublin. The day before I went was my birth day, November the 7th, 1763; and that very day I received the following short letter from my beloved parent.

“MY DEAR TATE,

“I have been in my bed very ill, in the bilious colic these three days; as soon as please God I am able, will answer all your particulars, but shall be at a loss to know whether to direct to Holyhead, or Dublin, or where. With all God’s blessings from

“Your ever affectionate mother,

“G. WILKINSON.”

I flattered myself, though it was an illness perhaps very severe at the time, yet it might soon amend; but God ordained it otherwise—in whose presence, I doubt not, she at this moment stands, pleading for his mercies on her son below.

I set off from Chester, and journeyed through Wales, and from thence got once more to Ireland; but previously had taken a benefit night at the Exchange-Hall, Chester, which was numerously attended. I must remark an odd circumstance relating to my success at Chester:—I acted twice there at the theatre and never had

had a good benefit; but at the rooms, dependent only on myself, I received on one occasion upwards of 40*l*. Not that I ever attended Chester with a view for emolument of any kind whatever, but being frequently at that place, did occasionally, as opportunity offered, try the experiment, as I went to and fro so frequently.

Barry gave me a sum and my benefit, to be clear of all expences, when I chose to take it, so there needed little invitation to induce me to visit my good Dublin friends.—And I should now rejoice could I change that disagreeable part of conveyance thither, the sea voyage; but indeed I should be making so many excursions to Ireland, was that obstacle removed, that I should be ruined with post-chaise hire; so I must be contented like Panglos, and persuade myself all is for the best. I went over in a dreadful storm; they talked of cutting the horses throats; I really thought they would have kicked the ship's sides into the sea: However the voyage was with difficulty accomplished, and when on shore my gratitude and dangers were too soon forgot. When I was well refreshed I waited on the attractive Mr. Barry, with whom all was soon settled, for his manners were irresistible. My first appearance was fixed on for Bayes, which was to be as soon as the play could be got ready. In the course of the first week, having an idle morning, I judged it would be pleasant, respectful, and right, to stretch a walk to visit my old friend Mr. Macklin, who then lived at the upper part of Drumcondra-Lane,

Drumeondra-Lane, the very out-skirt of Dublin, and almost in the country; though perhaps that street at this time is situated in the middle of Dublin, as the village of Marybone is in the city of Westminster. After my rat-tat at the door, a lazy servant at length opened it. (servants in general there are by no means so alert as in England.)—I inquired if Mr. Macklin was at home? He answered, “No, Sir, indeed, he is not.” I left a card and my compliments, “Mr. Wilkinson from England,” but had not gone many yards on my return before the sash of the dining-room window was thrown swiftly up, and Mr. Macklin, in his red night-cap, loudly cried out, “Wilkinson! Wilkinson! I am at home! I am at home! come back, I want to see you.” I returned on the sudden invitation, the door was opened, and up stairs I mounted, was escorted into the dining-room, where I had no sooner entered than instead of Mr. Macklin *solus* as I expected, behind the door (which opened inward) stood Mr. Mossop erect, with a sword by his side, and in full dress. After the usual salutations and observations on the weather, and how all went on in England, &c. Mr. Mossop said grandly, he was very happy in having that opportunity of meeting me, as he wanted to mention such proposals for his theatre for the season as he was certain must meet with my approbation, for they would prove to me most eligible, agreeable, and highly profitable. Mr. Macklin urged the matter as his

advice for the good of us both, and said he was willing, on his part, to contribute all in his power to add to the proposed union, and for the general good. Mr. Macklin was at that time engaged with Mr. Mossop. I was so circumstanced as impelled me to declare myself obliged to Mr. Mossop for his offer, but was under the necessity honestly to tell him it was then too late. I had come over to Dublin not positively engaged it was true: I had received in England letters from Mr. Jefferson first, then from Mr. Barry while at Chester, but had not entered into actual agreement till three days previous to that present one; so that I had signed and sealed, and the matter was irrevocable. Mr. Macklin paused, looked disappointed and sorry.—Mossop breathed hard, rolled his eyes, and snuffed the air; spoke not, looked not, smiled indignant, and with resentment put his hand on his sword; his eyes looked terror; all was sunk in silence; I judged it very improper hastily to depart, and he seemed determined not to move and leave me with Mr. Macklin. I was really in a puzzling situation, being actually engaged with company at four o'clock at the worthy Cornelius Kelly's in Capel-street, who was then beloved and known by every body, and I believe is yet living, and must be a surprising age. However, I sat at Macklin's till five, when looking suddenly at my watch I seemed much surprised at the time having passed so swiftly; that I had strangely and rudely forgot myself, as I was
an

an hour beyond the time of my engagement in Capel-street, and made my bow of departure; when Mr. Mossop rose up suddenly and said, "Sir, I wish to attend you." On crossing the channels, which were remarkably dirty, he offered me his hand very politely, then suddenly walked on for the space of five or six minutes, when after a tragic ejaculation he stopped and said, "Sir! Mr. Wil—kin—son! how do you dare to live, Sir?"—"Why, Sir, I do not think it strange my daring, but liking to live, having such plentiful tables where I am daily made welcome in Dublin with such a number of respectable friends."—"Sir," said Mossop, "you are going to play in Crow-street theatre with Barry, Sir,—and, Sir, I will run you through the bo—dy, Sir, if you take the liberty to attempt my manner by any mimicry on the stage. You must promise me, Sir, on your honour you will not dare to attempt it: If you break that promise, Sir, you cannot live; and you, Mr. Wil—kin—son, must die—as you must meet me the next day, and I shall kill you, Sir."—I told him it was impossible to comply with that his mandate, as his threats would of course from necessity and policy have a contrary effect than what he expected, as by entreaty he would have been more likely to have carried his point: for if it once came to be known how he had worked upon my fears, there would not be a carpenter or dresser in the Dublin theatre but would kick me; and as I esteemed Mr. Mossop as a gentleman and as an actor of the first

eminence on any stage, if he insisted on the dispute being seriously terminated, it would be my ultimate wish, my *omnium*, to have an affair of honour with him in preference to any other gentleman whatever, on account of his theatrical consequence; as if I was fortunate it would deter many from being impudent, and if I fell in battle it must be with eclat, as it would be by the hand of so celebrated a tragedian. The coolness and serious manner, blended with ironical humour, with which I delivered that speech to Mossop, absolutely staggered him with surprise, as instead of the crouching he expected, there was an apparent calmness, steadiness, and determination in what I said. At last he spoke the following words: "You dare not take me off, Sir; or if you do, dare not to take me off more than a *little*; if you do more, Sir, you shall die."—He then instantly departed as majestic as the ghost of Julius Cæsar. I very swiftly posted and wished for wings to fly to Capel-street, where I was in good English and Irish well lectured, without any opportunity for a long time of making any defence; but when breathing-time allowed a possibility for me, the culprit, to make any vindication, and requesting a fair trial and a benevolent jury, and relying on the laws of the country for an honourable and just examination, though at that time under severe condemnation; yet trusting I might be indulged with a candid hearing in my own justification, I was not only listened to, but most honourably acquitted,

acquitted, and with great approbation ; for Mos-
sop's pride was so well known that they enjoyed
his mortification : and, blessed be God, my vera-
city was so well believed, that though the dinner
was spoiled, (a material circumstance against me,
and to the feelings of each craving stomach) we
had a most remarkable cheerful day. When the
evening grew late, Mrs. Wilson, a sister of Mrs.
Kelly's, who lived as a companion from her child-
hood with the late Dowager Lady Granard, said
to me, " Come, Tate, you have been uncommon
good company to day ; I will not have either chair
or coach, for I want you as my guard from Capel-
street to Stephen's Green ;" which is near the di-
stance from St. Clement's church to Soho-square
in London. We set off on our parade, as she
seemed determined to walk, it being moon-light,
and the streets also well lamped, though a coach
or chair was as easy to command as in any part
of London. She often halted as if not well, and
said she had something to tell me : I urged her
often to inform me what had so apparently af-
fected her ? she answered she would satisfy my in-
quiries if I would first escort her to Lord Forbes's
in Stephen's Green. I perceived her as walking
up Dawson-street particularly agitated, and when
crossing the walk of Stephen's Green (the St.
James's Park of Dublin for Promenade) she com-
plained of being ill, and begged to sit down on
one of the benches, which I complied with ; and
after much apparent sorrow she said, " My dear
Tate, faith you have been so lively and entertain-
ing this day, and made so many of my friends
happy

happy to see you in such great spirits, you must have noticed surely every person's care and kind attention to you as more than common, though they are your sincere and good well-wishers; and not being by any means willing to disturb the pleasant party at my sister's, I put on a pleasing countenance with an aching heart of sorrow, therefore the lot of conveying ill news is reserved for me." She then burst into tears and said, "My dear Tate, I have received a letter from your mother's dearest well-wisher, Lady Forbes, truly lamenting the loss of her agreeable intimate friend and old acquaintance, your *dear* and *revered* mother, with whom she has known many happy days. Her Ladyship desired me to assure you, Tate, that every attendance a person of the highest rank could have required had not been wanting to relieve, aid, and support her tottering impaired state of health."—Her Ladyship had added, that she would herself have been at the expence of sending for me, but that my mother had thanked Lady Forbes for the favour, and said, as my seeing her agonies could only afflict her son, and would add to her own pangs, without answering any purpose, she esteemed it as a blessing from God that Tate was at a distance instead of being present; at the same time imploring every benediction on her son's head from the Almighty, and declaring that her off-spring had behaved nobly in his allowance for her comforts of life; and to add to his expences, or im-bitter his mind with sorrow, would prevent that peaceful exit to God, which she did not dread, but
approached

approached with reverence and hope; awfully relying on his all-gracious mercies, and she felt consolation in her quitting this earthly abode of sorrow: That I was then under the patronage of my Dublin wonderfully good friends, and that she in her son's prosperity had INHERITED the utmost wishes and buildings of her fancy. Lady Forbes honoured me so far as to take every care of the funeral, &c. herself. My mother requested, if it might be granted without any extraordinary expence, to be laid in the vault of the Savoy Chapel, where my father had so many years been a minister; but the Rev. Mr. Wilmot, then my father's successor, refused the grant, unless the expensive fees were complied with, which my good mother had prohibited being acquiesced with on any account, as she thought her husband, who had so long been minister, and a grace and honour to the pulpit as a preacher, her having an elder son and two daughters in that vault, humanity, charity, pity, and religion, might have granted a wife and mother, of most amiable and virtuous character in every true sense of the word, such a boon: but to the shame of the minister, Christianity, and common feeling, it was denied; and she was decently, and truly mournfully attended by respectable persons, and such true friends as were not ashamed to pay a tribute to a woman of as good qualities as ever exalted or honoured Human Nature.—Were it possible a religious and amiable mind could procure happiness for another in this world, my mother's true prayers and petitions presented at the High Throne of Mercy in my

my behalf would at this time, with the Almighty's will, have made me one of the most blessed men in this life :—But we should work ourselves and not trust to the labour of others ; as the best find that “ strait is the gate and narrow is the path which leads to Heaven.”

Mrs. Wilson also delivered me a paper inclosed from Lady Forbes, wrote by my mother to the following effect, which I, replete with grief, thrust into my pocket, being full of distress and agitation, for Nature will be Nature ; but her letters to me at Norwich, my last farewell, the epistle to Chester, &c. had in some measure prepared me for an event expected, though not so suddenly ; but when choaked with agony at my last seeing her in London, she had, spirit-like, awfully informed me she should never behold me more ; so that altogether they had certainly been preparatives for the greatest loss that can be known, that of an indulgent and good parent. As a son I can repeat with truth that I was dutiful and respectful ; but when children slight an affectionate father or mother, they not only give a stab to the parent, but open a sluice in their own hearts for the admittance of every iron corrosive and melancholy quality, the which will to a certainty one day or other soften what was hard and obdurate, and make them truly reflect with Shakspeare——

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.

Indeed

Indeed misfortune seldom pays a visit alone, but is too often attended by a crowded procession of ills and vexations, which answers one good purpose, as it prepares the mind for submission and a proper resignation to quit a life, which otherwise with health, attended by the gaudy pleasures of the world, Nature tugs and makes us unwillingly give up.

I retired home to Mr. Chaigneau's house in Abbey-street, where I then was till I suited myself with a lodging to my mind, Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau being that winter at Bath. I could not rest, but run over the many good acts my mother had done, and the many sufferings she had undergone; but feeling that truly happy and glowing sensation, the inspiration of the Almighty, that told me I had acted dutifully and right by having supplied her wants, and that her last years were by her confessedly years of happiness and content, it reconciled me to myself; and when the morning gave a sufficient light, I earnestly looked over the paper enclosed to me by Lady Forbes in my mother's hand-writing, great part of it is here inserted:

MY DEAR TATE,

" HAVING such frequent returns of this giddy
 " disorder in my head, though well and free from
 " any complaint at this time, yet I must look
 " upon these sudden attacks as most proper
 " warnings that I may resign life in one moment,
 " therefore leave this short memorandum of my
 " wearing

“ wearing apparel. I would have you divide it
“ between Mrs. Judkins and Mrs. Jack :—I
“ mean my common gowns, linen, and such
“ as may be proper for them, at your discretion ;
“ also such petticoats, cloaks, &c. as may be warm
“ to that poor old woman, Mrs. Jack.—I have
“ nothing worth leaving to my best friends. As
“ you know them all, if any little thing will be
“ acceptable, let the offer come from you, par-
“ ticularly to Mrs. Batt, and Mrs. Hutchinson.
“ Whether in sickness or in health I feel no re-
“ luctance at quitting this world but the sepa-
“ ration from my dearly beloved Tate.—If in
“ my senses my last breath will be imploring God’s
“ blessings for all that is truly good to you, that
“ the same good Providence may still attend you,
“ and that you may ever be defended from all
“ the evils and dangers of the world. I pray God
“ to conduct you through life ; and as I am hap-
“ py in believing you are blessed with an honest
“ good heart, so doubt not but you will give due
“ attention to the plain and easy duties of re-
“ ligion, which will be the certain way to secure
“ the favour of God both here and hereafter ;
“ where may we meet to live for ever in heaven,
“ through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.
“ *Amen.*

“ I desire no mark of folly or ridiculous pride
“ may attend me to my bed of dust ; plain and
“ decent as possible ; neither any dressed up cata-
“ logue of virtues in the news. I am at this in-
“ stant

“ stand well, calm, cheerful, and happy ; in good
“ health and spirits, and, whilst in this world,

“ Your most tender

“ And affectionate mother,

“ G. WILKINSON.”

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

230 T. A. WILKINSON.

30 AU 65 I have well, calm, happy; in good
health and spirits, and, while in this world,

Your most tender

and affectionate mother,

G. WILKINSON.

